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ABSTRACT

The goal of the 1981-82 examination of the Evaluation Scale (ES) of the City University of New York's (CUNY) Writing Skills Assessment Test (WSAT) was to ascertain if the descriptive criteria of the original ES, instituted in 1978, might be refined in the light of CUNY's four years of experience with large-scale testing at a multicampus university. Phase I was an attempt to develop refined descriptive criteria for the scores of 1-6 that comprise the ES. This attempt was successful and resulted in a Refined ES. Phase II sought in a pilot study to test the hypothesis that the Refined ES is a revision of the original ES, not a new document. This hypothesis was supported by the pilot study. Thus, the established standards of the WSAT were not disturbed by the Refined ES, and many benefits were provided. As a result, the Refined ES was adopted for official use within CUNY. Appendices that comprise two-thirds of this report include a sample of the CUNY WSAT, the original ES, materials used by the panel involved in the refinement of the ES, scored student essays for panelists' use (Phase I), panelists' descriptive criteria, the Refined ES, the reader guidelines for holistic scoring (Phase II), and a list of participants in the study. (CMG)

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RESEARCH MONOGRAPH SERIES
REPORT NO. 3

AN *A POSTERIORI* EXAMINATION OF THE EVALUATION SCALE OF THE WRITING ASSESSMENT TEST AT THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

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November 1982

UD 023 112

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AN A POSTERIORI EXAMINATION OF THE EVALUATION SCALE OF THE WRITING SKILLS ASSESSMENT TEST AT THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

SUMMARY OF THE MONOGRAPH

This monograph has two purposes: to present a research-based refinement of the descriptive criteria used in the Evaluation Scale of the Writing Skills Assessment Test developed at The City University of New York (CUNY) and to describe the research process that produced that refinement. The word "refinement" is used here deliberately to make it clear that as a result of this project the original Evaluation Scale of the CUNY Writing Skills Assessment Test, written in 1977-78, has been updated and revised, but not replaced.

The research process described here consisted of two phases and involved the participation of approximately 100 people over the period of an entire year. Phase I of this study entailed research that led to the development of the refined descriptive criteria in the Evaluation Scale. This process of consultation and consensus took ten months, from May 1981 through February 1982. Phase II of this study entailed a pilot study that tried out the Refined Evaluation Scale under experimental conditions. The process of organizing and conducting the pilot study and of analyzing

its data took another four months, from March 1982 through June 1982. Due to the positive findings that resulted from the pilot study, the CUNY Chancellor's Task Force on Writing officially adopted the Refined Evaluation Scale for use throughout CUNY. To provide sufficient time for the dissemination of this monograph and of the Refined Evaluation Scale, and to assure that there would be subsequent time for the orientation of all CUNY Writing Skills Assessment Test readers to the Refined Evaluation Scale, the date for required official use of the Refined Evaluation Scale at CUNY was set by the Task Force on Writing as the spring of 1983.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Perhaps the greatest pleasure I had while conducting the research described in this monograph was the opportunity to work with many talented, constructive colleagues. I am delighted to be able to thank the nearly 100 people who participated in or reacted to this study as it went along. Final responsibility for any flaws rests with me, however, not with the people to whom I extend my sincere appreciation.

At frequent intervals throughout this entire study, the Chancellor's Task Force on Writing received interim reports on the progress of the work, authorized the continuation of the project, and served as editors of the wording of the Refined Evaluation Scale. Without the active support of the Task Force, chaired by Harvey Wiener of LaGuardia Community College, this project could never have been undertaken or completed. Nor could this project have gone forward without the resources and invaluable counsel of Dean Marie Jean Lederman of the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs who is in charge of the CUNY Freshman Skills Assessment Program and who is also Director of the CUNY Instructional Resource Center. Her expertise and encouragement, along with that of Dean Michael Ribaudo of the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs, were indispensable for the successful outcome of this project. In addition, Susan Remmer Ryzewic, Research Analyst for the Freshman Skills Assessment Program, supervised the data analysis of the pilot study with impressive skill.

Also, Marilyn Maiz, Assistant to the Dean for the Freshman Skills Assessment Program, not only coordinated the myriad administrative details of the project but also offered excellent advice and insights throughout the study.

Almost 100 other people took part in this project, giving generously of their time and expert advice. Both CUNY and non-CUNY faculty experienced in teaching writing were included to enhance the research design and to ensure that the research results would be derived from a widely representative sample of faculty and of types of colleges. It is important to note, therefore, that faculty from seven different non-CUNY four-year and two-year colleges participated in this study, along with faculty from all seventeen of the CUNY undergraduate campuses.

From both CUNY and non-CUNY colleges, fourteen people served as panelists during Phase I of this study, thereby providing the data needed to start the refinements of the Evaluation Scale. The Chief Readers at each of the seventeen undergraduate campuses of CUNY read the report of Phase I and, at a specially convened meeting, endorsed the document and made suggestions for some changes in the final wording of the Refined Evaluation Scale. Other CUNY faculty offered their reactions to the report of Phase I, including Robert Lyons of Queens College, the first Chair of the CUNY Chancellor's Task Force on Writing and former CUNY Associate Dean of Academic Affairs; Kenneth Bruffee of Brooklyn

College, the second chair of the CUNY Chancellor's Task Force on Writing; and Jerrold Nudelman of Queensborough Community College. Leonard Alshan of City College served as consultant on the research design for Phase II of this study.

During Phase II, fifty-eight additional faculty participated as Consultant Readers at sessions conducted to read the student essays in the pilot study. The readings were led by Richard Bedrosian of New York City Technical College, Chief Reader for the CUNY Writing Skills Assessment Test audit readings. After the readings were completed, many of the Consultant Readers also took part in discussions that compared the original and refined descriptive criteria. Appendix VIII lists the names and academic affiliations of the CUNY Chancellor's Task Force on Writing, the panelists for Phase I of this study, the CUNY Chief Readers, and the Consultant Readers for the pilot study in Phase II of this study.

AN A POSTERIORI EXAMINATION OF THE EVALUATION SCALE OF THE WRITING SKILLS ASSESSMENT TEST AT THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

PHASE I: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE "REFINED EVALUATION SCALE"

Background

The Writing Skills Assessment Test (WSAT) was developed at The City University of New York (CUNY) in response to a directive from the CUNY Board of Trustees mandating that CUNY students be required to demonstrate proficiency in basic learning skills.[1] A CUNY Chancellor's Task Force on Writing designed the WSAT especially for CUNY, the largest urban university in America, serving approximately 170,000 students. CUNY consists of seven community colleges, one technical college, nine senior colleges, a graduate center, and an affiliated medical school. In the spring of 1978, the WSAT was administered for the first time, and by now it is established firmly as part of the academic program at CUNY's undergraduate colleges. At all these colleges, the WSAT is used for placement; at fourteen of these colleges, at this time, the WSAT is used also as an exit test before movement to the upper divisions.

As of spring of 1981, CUNY had had four years of experience with the WSAT. That experience demonstrated that large-scale testing programs using student writing, rather than

multiple-choice tests, are not only desirable but feasible. They are desirable for face, content, and construct validity; they are also desirable for their impact on writing curricula in high schools and colleges. Such tests are also feasible, for if a university as large as CUNY can operate the program effectively, so too can other schools.

The experience of four years with the WSAT has also yielded much data about college student writing, about the writing abilities of CUNY students, and about the WSAT program itself. The research reported here was undertaken to examine part of the WSAT program. This project is one of a group of studies relating to the WSAT that have been conducted under the aegis of the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs.

Description of the WSAT

The WSAT requires students to write an essay in fifty minutes in response to either of two offered prompts, both of which call for persuasive expository writing. A sample of the WSAT is shown in Appendix I. New prompts for the essays are developed each academic year under the supervision of the CUNY Chancellor's Task Force on Writing; the format of the test remains constant, however. The essays are read and scored by faculty who assess the writing according to formal "holistic" scoring procedures. Holistic scoring originated at Educational Testing Service during the 1960's, and it is widely recognized as a valid and reliable method of judging writing ability. Classic holistic scoring

procedures emphasize orienting readers with "range finders," a set of sample test essays each of which represents a score on a scale. For the WSAT, the scale ranges from 1 (low) to 6 (high).

Every essay written for the WSAT is scored by two different readers, each of whom does not know what score the other reader has given the essay. An essay earning a 4+4 or more is considered proficient according to CUNY standards. An essay earning a 3+3 or less is considered non-proficient, and the student who wrote the essay is given remedial instruction so that he or she can attain the required proficiency level. Any essay given a passing score (4,5,6) by one reader and a failing score (1,2,3) by a second reader is always given a third reading by yet another reader. Such score configurations are called "splits." Relatively few essays are "splits," but of those that are, the majority cluster at the pass/fail cutoff of 3 and 4.

In addition to the range finders, another aid is available to readers of WSAT essays. When designing the WSAT, the CUNY Task Force on Writing composed an Evaluation Scale (ES) to present descriptive criteria for the writing skills that relate to the WSAT scores of 1 through 6. Thus, readers at WSAT scoring sessions consult the ES, as well as the range finders, when they are preparing to score student essays. The ES has also become a resource for students who wish to understand the standards demanded by the WSAT and thereby to prepare to take the test.

The ES is part of a CUNY information bulletin on the WSAT available to teachers, students, and parents.[2]

The descriptive criteria given in the ES are the focus of this study.

The Purpose of Phase I of this Study

The purpose of Phase I of this study was to examine the ES of the WSAT to see if the descriptive criteria for each of the scores of 1 through 6 needed updating in light of four years of experience with the WSAT. In no way was this study designed to affect the numerical scoring of the WSAT: the scores of 1 through 6 have proved to be extremely useful. In no way was this study designed to affect the system of holistic scoring used for the WSAT: the system has proved to be workable, reliable, and effective.[3] Only the content of the ES was examined under research conditions for the purpose of determining whether the descriptions of the scores might be refined.

That such a study would be undertaken would not come as a surprise to Mina Shaughnessy, for in 1976 she predicted that it might be needed. As convener of the CUNY Task Force on Writing that designed the WSAT, Dean Shaughnessy prepared a working paper on scoring criteria. She ended her paper with a recommendation that criteria be refined in the light of experience:

> Much might ultimately be learned as data from examinations are accumulated about the correlations between readers' judgments and measurable features of students' essays, but lacking such data now and fearing

However, we do not expect readers to give 1's to papers that other readers have scored 4."[7] Similarly, a publication sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English says in describing holistic scoring:

> When papers are being read for the second time, the table leaders check to make certain that no paper has two scores differing by more than one point. If the difference is more than one point, then the table leader reads the paper a third time.[8]

For the WSAT, however, a one-point difference does matter in the case of "splits" of 3 scores and 4 scores. Because CUNY had to set a cutoff score that indicated proficiency, the problem of a one-point difference could not be avoided entirely. The record at CUNY is, however, impressive. Audits conducted in 1979, 1980, and 1981 indicated that on the average 55% of the essays were given the same score by both readers while 38% differed by only one point. According to holistic scoring standards, this is 93% agreement. Further, of the 38% that differed by one point, only 15% were "splits" of 3's and 4's.[9] Still, descriptions of a 3 paper and of a 4 paper, separate from the descriptions of a 2 paper and of a 5 paper, respectively, were thought to be potential aids to readers.

Procedures Used for Phase I of this Study

The investigator convened two separate panels for the purpose of validating and/or refining the descriptive criteria in the ES of the WSAT. Each panel was led through identical jury validation procedures adapted by the investigator for this study. (Agendas

for the meetings of each panel are given in Appendix III; they are the same except for the dates.)

The panels were arranged deliberately so that one group consisted entirely of CUNY faculty experienced in scoring essays for the WSAT and the other group consisted entirely of non-CUNY faculty with little or no knowledge about the WSAT. This separation was done so that there could be a comparison of results derived from two different levels of experience with large-scale essay testing. Also, no two panelists were from the same college. Each group consisted of seven members in addition to the investigator. Only two people were present at both panel meetings: the investigator and Marilyn Maiz of the CUNY Instructional Resource Center who served as a panelist on the CUNY faculty panel and as an observer at the non-CUNY faculty panel meeting. This latter role was especially important because the investigator was eager to have someone other than herself present at both meetings so that overall impressions of the meetings and their outcomes could be shared and cross-checked.[10]

At each of the panel meetings, the investigator started the sessions by explaining that the purpose of convening the panels was to see if the descriptive criteria in the ES of the WSAT might be refined on the basis of four years of experience with the WSAT. So that the panelists could contribute descriptive criteria that would be their original products, they were not shown the ES until the last segment of the panel meetings. The

> that any attempt at quantification, no matter how conscientious, would also run the risk of shifting teaching priorities so as to encourage narrowly literal views of writing competence, the committee recommends that the criteria listed above be refined through the process of examining cases in reader-training sessions.[4]

The research principle underlying this study is that descriptive categories developed a priori for a testing instrument should be reviewed after a time of accumulated experience. The descriptive categories can then, if deemed necessary, be refined a posteriori to accommodate new insights garnered from extensive hands-on work with the testing instrument.[5] This type of formal review of descriptive categories can lead to one of two outcomes: a reaffirmation of the material as it stands or a refinement of the material so that it conforms more closely to that which it aims to describe.

The members of the CUNY Task Force on Writing responsible for the design of the WSAT in 1977-78 were English faculty experienced in the teaching of writing. Because CUNY was among the pioneers in designing a testing program based on writing samples administered at a huge, multi-campus university, none of the Task Force members had had experience in such matters. Thus, a review of the ES as it was developed a priori permits the WSAT to benefit from a posteriori observations about its contents.

Three additional reasons contributed to the decision to undertake a review of the ES descriptive criteria. First, face validity was of interest. The ES is for a six-point scale, but it

combines descriptive criteria for the 2 and 3 scores as well as for the 4 and 5 scores. (See Appendix II for the complete text of the original ES of the WSAT.) It seemed that the face validity of the ES might be enhanced if it had separate descriptions for each of the six points on the scale. Second, communicating the WSAT criteria as clearly as possible was of interest. It was felt that this could help the WSAT become an even greater aid to teachers as they diagnose their students' strengths and weaknesses as writers.[6] Also, as national attention increasingly focuses on the pioneer work in writing assessment at CUNY, it was thought that a refinement of the descriptive criteria might help other professionals -- teachers, testers, and researchers -- who wish to follow the CUNY model. In addition, clearer criteria seemed likely to be especially helpful to students preparing to take the test.

The third reason to review the ES descriptive criteria is related to the "splits" described above (p. 3). It was hoped that clearer distinctions in the descriptions, particularly between the 3 score and the 4 score, might help readers. Such differentiations between 3 and 4 essays are not easy; indeed, according to holistic scoring theory, a disagreement of only one point is considered agreement in scoring. One of the originators of Educational Testing Service's holistic scoring system wrote in her explanatory document about the method: On a four-point scale, "if one reader judges a paper as 3 and another as 4, no one is greatly alarmed. We expect such differences occasionally.

investigator explained that the scoring range was 1-6 and that the essay prompts elicited writing in the category of persuasive expository discourse. Next, splits of 3 scores and 4 scores were explained, with reference to the two quotations given above (pp. 6-7).

The panelists were then asked to write the criteria that they would use to describe six levels of writing skills, with the understanding that the score of 4 was to be considered proficient, though surely not perfect, and that the score of 3 was to be considered the product of a writer in need of remedial instruction. To orient the panelists to their writing task, two documents were then distributed (see Appendix III): (1) an example of a descriptive scale not useful for CUNY because it is too thin and vague -- the panelists were asked not to write a scale of this sort; (2) a statement taken from a CUNY "Student Information Bulletin" explaining how the WSAT essays are scored -- the panelists were asked to read this brief statement so that they would have a general orientation to the goals of the WSAT.

The panelists were given about three-quarters of an hour to write their criteria. The purpose of this activity was to see if the panelists could easily generate descriptions for each of the six points on the scale or whether they would prefer to combine the 2 and 3 scores as well as the 4 and 5 scores, as on the ES of the WSAT. After the writing of criteria, the panelists were asked to share their descriptions with the group. The groups worked on

each score, starting with the 1, before moving on to the next score. Panelists were invited to discuss their criteria as fully as possible.

The panelists were next asked to read a set of sample student essays, scored and used as "range finders" at CUNY central audits of the WSAT scorings. The panelists were told the score given to each sample essay. (The full set of these materials as given to the panelists is given in Appendix IV.) The panelists were asked to make whatever additions, deletions, or modifications they wished in light of their reading of the sample student essays. So that the resulting data would be clear, the panelists were asked to use a different color ink (red and green pens were supplied) when making any change in what they had originally written. About a half-hour was assigned to this task. The panelists then discussed their observations about their criteria in light of having read the set of sample student essays. Finally, the panelists were shown the ES of the WSAT and were asked to comment on it.

During all discussions, the investigator took notes about overall impressions of the trends in the comments made. The investigator had three questions in mind as she listened to the discussions:

1. Would the panelists have difficulty, either theoretically or practically, in making distinctions within a six-point scale to describe a range of writing skills?

2. Would the CUNY panelists write more focused descriptive criteria than would the non-CUNY panelists? The hypothesis here was that after four years of experience with the WSAT, the CUNY panelists would have clear (and likely succinct) notions of what they expected at each point on the six-point scale. The non-CUNY panelists, on the other hand, would have been in somewhat the same situation as were the members of the CUNY Task Force on Writing that originally designed the WSAT and its original ES: experienced in the teaching of writing but inexperienced in thinking about large-scale assessment criteria along a six-point continuum of skills.

3. What would be the reaction of the panelists to the ES of the WSAT after they had written their own descriptive criteria?

Furthermore, the investigator wanted to see if she might later be able to suggest refinements of the descriptive criteria based on the panel meetings, or if she might suggest instead that the current ES be reaffirmed as a document that held up under a posteriori examination. If changes were to be suggested, the investigator wanted them to be based on the trends in the discussions as well as the descriptive criteria written by the panelists. There was no intention during the panel meetings to move the groups toward consensus of the sort that is expected, for example, at a holistic scoring session. Rather, the investigator wanted to elicit independently generated criteria tempered by the subsequent group discussion and by reference to sample

student essays. Thus, synthesis of the descriptive criteria was intended not to be limited to a mere combining of wording used by the panelists.

Data Derived from Phase I of this Study

All panelists wrote descriptive criteria. Two people, one on the CUNY panel and one on the non-CUNY panel, did not have enough time to finish discribing each of the scores, but neither indicated that he or she was having trouble with the notion of six separate descriptions. (Typewritten transcripts of the panelists' descriptive criteria appear in Appendix V.)[11]

Taken together, the panelists' criteria and the discussions at the panel meetings led the investigator to these observations:

1. With one exception, no one on either panel was troubled by the notion of a six-point scale. One non-CUNY panelist felt CUNY should use a 4 point scale; the investigator explained that 6 points gave CUNY greater descriptive range.

2. All panelists understood from the start that a 1 paper would be extremely weak and that a 6 paper would be relatively well done. During the discussion periods at the panel meetings, considerably more time was spent discussing 3 papers and 4 papers than any of the other scores. Everyone realized that these were the scores in need of careful

distinction between them as well as in contrast to other scores on the scale.

3. The CUNY panelists tended to write more focused and succinct descriptions. They were shorter, on the whole, than were those of the non-CUNY panelists. This outcome was anticipated, because the CUNY panelists have had four years of experience with the WSAT. Also, the CUNY panelists started their writing much more quickly than did the non-CUNY panelists. The latter group had many more questions about CUNY, the WSAT and related topics than did the CUNY group. The investigator feels now that she should have anticipated this very normal level of curiosity about the workings of another institution, and she would in the future add extra time to any meeting of a non-CUNY panel.

4. The CUNY panelists were, of course, aware that the original ES of the WSAT combines the 2 and 3 scores and the 4 and 5 scores. When they heard that one purpose of the panel meeting was to see if we could derive six separate descriptions, they were pleased. A number of panelists said that the original ES had been troubling them because of the combining of the scores. One panelist said that "an honest description of what we have been doing" when we make distinctions between 2 and 3 essays as well as between 4 and 5 essays will help readers as well as students. All panelists agreed, however, that the original ES of the WSAT

had been a useful document at first, before experience with scoring had begun to accumulate.

5. The non-CUNY panelists were not aware that the original ES of the WSAT combines scores until they saw the original ES at the end of their panel meeting. They expressed interest in the fact that the scores had been combined, but they said that they preferred separate descriptions.

6. All of the panelists said that the process of participating on the panel had helped them clarify their goals in teaching. Many of the CUNY panelists said that they thought they would now be much more accurate scorers, and they recommended that all WSAT readers go through this same panel experience. Many of the non-CUNY panelists asked for photocopies of their descriptions because they wanted to bring them back to their colleges and, in the case of one of the panelists, distribute them to their students as statements of expectations.

Discussion of the Data from Phase I of this Study

After studying the data from Phase I of this study, the investigator suggested that the original ES scale be refined to include separate descriptions of criteria for each of the six points on the WSAT scale because the work of the two groups of panelists showed that distinctions can be made among all six scores. At the same time, the investigator suggested that

whenever possible the language of the original ES be retained. For example, because papers earning a score of 1 are usually easy to identify, the description used in the original ES seemed useful to retain. Also, the general tone of the original ES is fairly positive, a quality that this investigator thought should be preserved as much as possible.

The investigator then composed a draft for the refined descriptive criteria for scores 2 through 5. Later, after consultation with the CUNY Chancellor's Task Force on Writing and the CUNY Chief Readers, she also composed a draft of a refined description of the 6 score. In writing refined descriptions the investigator kept the following in mind:

1. The scale is a continuum and the descriptions, therefore, should as much as possible be related to each other. That is, the same matters should be treated in each description, within the limits of clear communication and the desire not to overemphasize the negative. Also, the descriptions should be read in relation to one another, not merely as discrete descriptions. In particular, the panelists emphasized that any student essay created a <u>cumulative impression</u>, in that when a critical mass of errors or of quality writing was reached, a score was given. Too, the panelists were interested in <u>balance</u>, the trade-off between content and form that occurs in particular in splits of 3 scores and 4 scores. It is interesting to note that here

the panelists had come full circle, in that they were dealing with a basic tenet of classic holistic scoring: that writing is a unitary trait and that it can be judged by considering the total impression it makes on the reader.

2. Most panelists felt during the discussions that two features characterized lower-half papers (1-3 scores in particular): a tendency to rely on written transcriptions of oral language and a tendency to be repetitious. The panelists emphasized the importance of including these two characteristics in the descriptions.

3. The original ES was developed primarily for readers to use when scoring essays written for the WSAT. By now, the ES has become an important part of the CUNY information bulletin on the WSAT which is referred to by students who want to understand the CUNY writing skills standards.[12] Also, the ES is a public document for all to read: parents, administrators, government officials, non-CUNY faculty, etc. As such the distinctions among points must be clear. Thus, the investigator often could not use some of the language in the panelists' descriptive criteria, for the terms might not be easily understood by people who do not teach English.

Refined Evaluation Scale

The Refined ES is the result of a consensus process that occupied approximately one year and that involved almost 100 people.

After the panelists (N=14) met, the investigator drafted refinements of the descriptive criteria that comprise the ES. Her draft was then edited and approved by the CUNY Chancellor's Task Force on Writing (N=10). Next, the Chief Readers on all the CUNY campuses (N=17) met together to discuss the report of Phase I of this study. At that time, they made suggestions for a few additional editorial changes. At various points in this process, a number of other CUNY faculty and staff made suggestions for the Refined ES. Once this work was complete, the Task Force approved plans for a pilot study using the Refined ES. The pilot study, which involved the participation of 56 people, is described in the report of Phase II of this study.

Here is the refined ES.

Writing Skills Assessment Test Evaluation Scale

(refined 1981-82)

6

The essay provides a well-organized response to the topic and maintains a central focus. The ideas are expressed in appropriate language. A sense of pattern of development is present from beginning to end. The writer supports assertions with explanation or illustration, and the vocabulary is well suited to the context. Sentences reflect a command of syntax within the ordinary range of standard written English. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are almost always correct.

5

The essay provides an organized response to the topic. The ideas are expressed in clear language most of the time. The writer develops ideas and generally signals relationships within and between paragraphs. The writer uses vocabulary that is appropriate for the essay topic and avoids oversimplifications or distortions. Sentences generally are correct grammatically, although some errors may be present when sentence structure is

particularly complex. With few exceptions, grammar, punctuation, and spelling are correct.

4

The essay shows a basic understanding of the demands of essay organization, although there might be occasional digressions. The development of ideas is sometimes incomplete or rudimentary, but a basic logical structure can be discerned. Vocabulary generally is appropriate for the essay topic but at times is oversimplified. Sentences reflect a sufficient command of standard written English to ensure reasonable clarity of expression. Common forms of agreement and grammatical inflection are usually, although not always, correct. The writer generally demonstrates through punctuation an understanding of the boundaries of the sentence. The writer spells common words, except perhaps so-called "demons," with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

3

The essay provides a response to the topic but generally has no overall pattern of organization. Ideas are often repeated or undeveloped, although occasionally a paragraph within the essay does have some structure. The writer uses informal language occasionally and records conversational speech when appropriate written prose is needed. Vocabulary often is limited. The writer generally does not signal relationships within and between paragraphs. Syntax is often rudimentary and lacking in variety. The essay has recurrent grammatical problems, or because of an extremely narrow range of syntactical choices, only occasional grammatical problems appear. The writer does not demonstrate a firm understanding of the boundaries of the sentence. The writer occasionally misspells common words of the language.

2

The essay begins with a response to the topic but does not develop that response. Ideas are repeated frequently, or are presented randomly, or both. The writer uses informal language frequently and does little more than record conversational speech. Words are often misused, and vocabulary is limited. Syntax is often tangled and is not sufficiently stable to ensure reasonable clarity of expression. Errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling occur often.

1

The essay suffers from general incoherence and has no discernible pattern of organization. It displays a high frequency of error in the regular features of standard written English. Lapses in punctuation, spelling, and grammar often frustrate the reader. Or, the essay is so brief that any reasonably accurate judgment of the writer's competence is impossible.

PHASE II: PILOT STUDY OF THE "REFINED EVALUATION SCALE"

Purpose of Phase II of this Study

The purpose of Phase II of this study was to use the Refined ES under experimental conditions to ascertain its effect on the scoring of essays written for the WSAT. Without research-based confirmation that the Refined ES was acceptable, the investigator and the CUNY Chancellor's Task Force on Writing knew that they would be substituting one a priori document for another. In spite of the fact that the Refined ES was written from research data (Phase I of this study) and was edited and approved by many faculty throughout CUNY, no claim of a posteriori confirmation had been intended without further research. A pilot study, therefore, was undertaken to compare the scoring effects of using the original ES and the Refined ES by testing the hypothesis that the Refined ES is a revision of the original ES, not a new document.

Two questions were paramount. Would the Refined ES adversely affect the reliability of scorers? Would the Refined ES lead scorers to assign scores very different from those assigned when the original ES was used? Under no circumstances did the investigator or the CUNY Chancellor's Task Force of Writing want to upset the clear and firmly established standards of the WSAT. At the same time, it was recognized that many benefits could result from adopting the Refined ES. The faculty who had edited and approved the Refined ES felt that face validity had been

improved with the use of six separate descriptions; that students would find the language easier to understand when preparing for the WSAT; and that faculty throughout CUNY would find an updated document a stimulating addition to the WSAT program. But all people involved knew that these benefits could accrue only if there were no negative dislocation in the scoring of the WSAT.

Design of the Pilot Study

In order to test the hypothesis of Phase II of this study (see p. 19), a pilot study was designed to compare the effect of using the original ES in contrast to the Refined ES when scoring WSAT essays. To this end, two separate scoring sessions were held, with each scheduled on a different day. No one scored essays at both sessions. Each session was conducted according to WSAT holistic scoring procedures. The only difference between the two sessions was the ES used by the scorers: the Refined ES was used at the first scoring session and the original ES was used at the second scoring session. Both sessions were conducted by the same person: the WSAT Chief Reader for the CUNY central audits, Richard Bedrosian of New York City Technical College. The investigator was present at both sessions as an observer only.

Scorers at the sessions were faculty experienced in the teaching of writing at the college level. Both CUNY and non-CUNY faculty participated as scorers at each session. This was done to assure that the outcomes could be relied upon for making decisions about future use of the Refined ES by any trained scorer, no matter how

much or little experience the person might have with scoring WSAT essays. In addition, both two-year and four-year faculty scored the pilot study essays. At each of the scoring sessions, 28 faculty served as readers; thus, a total of 56 people read essays for the pilot study. Table 1 shows the distribution of readers.

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF FACULTY WHO SCORED WSAT ESSAYS
IN THE PILOT STUDY

Institution	Session 1 (Refined Scale)	Session 2 (Original Scale)	Total
CUNY			
two-year	7	7	
four-year	7	7	
totals	14	14	28
NON-CUNY			
two-year	6	6	
four-year	8	8	
totals	14	14	28
Totals	28	28	56

All essays in this study were read by all readers. Thus, each essay was read 56 times. Because of this large number of readers, it was ascertained that 30 essays carefully chosen to represent the range of scores possible on the WSAT would be sufficient to satisfy confidence in the results of the pilot study. In formal terms, this research design was 2 x 2 x 30 repeated measures analysis of variance.[13]

Procedures Used for Phase II of this Study

Readers were selected for the pilot study to represent two-year and four-year colleges, CUNY and non-CUNY, in the numbers shown in Table 1. Criteria for selection of the CUNY scorers were either (1) good reader reliability statistics from the 1980 and/or 1981 WSAT central audits or (2) if the readers had not participated in a central audit, good recommendations from campus Chief Readers. The non-CUNY readers were selected to assure a variety of colleges, both two-year and four-year. In all, seven non-CUNY colleges were represented at the scoring sessions. Once the names of readers were compiled, invitations were issued on the basis of random assignment to one of the two scoring sessions.

The 30 essays needed for the pilot study were selected to represent the range of scores on the WSAT. The essays were selected from the pool of approximately 1500 essays used at the 1981 WSAT central audit. Each essay, therefore, had been scored twice (or more, in the case of certain split scores) at its home campus, and it had been scored twice (or more, in the case of splits of 3 scores and 4 scores) at the audit. The set of 30 essays was selected by a specially convened committee consisting of the investigator; the WSAT central audit Chief Reader, Richard Bedrosian of New York City Technical College; John Buckley of LaGuardia Community College who had been a panelist for Phase I of this study; and Marilyn Maiz, Assistant to the Dean for the Freshman Skills Assessment Program. The configuration of scores

in the group of 30 essays was: two essays that the committee felt were clear examples of each score of 1 through 6 (N=12) and six essays that the committee felt were clear examples of 2--3 splits, 3--4 splits, and 4--5 splits each (N=18). In the case of the six 3--4 splits, half had been resolved as 3's and half as 4's at both the home college and at the audit. The committee read many essays in their search for representative samples. Range finders for use at the scoring sessions of the pilot study were also selected by the committee. Once the essays had been selected, they were compiled in a random sequence of scores and were coded to conceal their scores from the readers. Every reader at the scoring sessions read the essays in the same order so that the results of the pilot study would not be influenced by a sequence effect. (It should be noted that for clarity of interpretation, the data reported below are displayed according to the audit scores for the essays, not according to the sequence in which the essays were read. The "essay number" shown for each essay, however, indicates where in the sequence of 30 essays a particular essay fell; the essay numbers are 10-40 so that only two-digit numbers were used.)

The scoring sessions were exactly alike except for the version of the ES given to the readers. To assure similarity of training of the readers, the Chief Reader prepared an outline of his remarks (see Appendix VII). Also, he assigned the range finders in the same sequence at each reading. Each reader was given a folder which contained the 30 essays in exactly alike sequences. All

readers were required to return all materials at the end of the sessions, so that no range finders or WSAT test essays were circulated between the two scoring sessions. After the scoring of the essays was completed at each session and all materials were handed in, the readers were invited to participate in a discussion of their reactions to the essays and related matters. At this time, the participants were shown whichever of the two versions of the ES they had not used so that they could give their opinions. The trend of these discussions revealed that the Refined ES was strongly preferred; people said that it seemed more precise, helpful, and readable than did the original ES. These reactions served to lend further face validation to the document.

Data Derived from the Pilot Study

Table 2 presents the results of the 2 x 2 x 30 repeated measures analysis of variance. College, the first factor, was divided into the categories of CUNY and non-CUNY readers. Scale, the second factor, was divided into the categories of the original ES and the Refined ES. The essays, which numbered thirty for this study, were read by each of the readers. As Table 2 shows, the null hypothesis of Phase II of this study was supported. That is, the use of the Refined ES resulted in the assignment of virtually the same scores as did the use of the original ES. This held true whether readers were from CUNY or non-CUNY colleges. The only statistically significant result was the effect of essays, which reflects the fact that the 30 essays were

deliberately chosen to represent the complete range of scores. The importance of these findings should be emphasized. It was hoped that the use of the Refined ES would not change the CUNY standards applied to WSAT essays. This was achieved. The present results suggest that the benefits of increased face validity, greater clarity of language for students, and renewed attention of faculty to scoring criteria will be available without affecting WSAT scores.

TABLE 2

2 x 2 x 30 REPEATED MEASURES

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Prob.
Mean	18553.5	1	18553.5	6162.0	.00
College	3.9	1	3.9	1.3	.26
Scale	1.5	1	1.5	0.5	.48
College x Scale	.2	1	0.2	0.1	.81
Error	156.6	52	3.0		
Essays	2391.3	29	82.4	185.1	.00
Essays x College	12.2	29	0.4	1.0	.55
Essays x Scale	12.0	29	0.4	0.9	.58
Essays x College X Scale	11.9	29	0.4	0.9	.59
Error	671.3	1508	0.4		

Table 3 shows that reader reliability was 84.1% for the entire pilot study. Therefore, the readers in the pilot study were very

TABLE 3

PASS/FAIL AGREEMENT WITH AUDIT SCORES

GROUP	N	% ESSAY PASS/FAIL AGREEMENT WITH AUDIT SCORES			% ESSAYS READERS PASS/AUDIT FAIL			% ESSAYS READERS FAIL/AUDIT PASS		
		TOTAL	ORIGINAL SCALE	REFINED SCALE	TOTAL	ORIGINAL SCALE	REFINED SCALE	TOTAL	ORIGINAL SCALE	REFINED SCALE
TOTAL	56	84.1%	83.9% (N=28)	84.2% (N=28)	6.6%	6.7% (N=28)	6.4% (N=28)	9.4%	9.4% (N=28)	9.4% (N=28)
NON-CUNY	28	82.9	83.8 (N=14)	81.9 (N=14)	5.7	5.5 (N=14)	6.0 (N=14)	11.4	10.7 (N=14)	12.1 (N=14)
2-YEAR	12	86.1	87.2 (N=6)	85.0 (N=6)	5.3	4.4 (N=6)	6.1 (N=6)	8.6	8.3 (N=6)	8.9 (N=6)
4-YEAR	16	80.4	81.3 (N=8)	79.6 (N=8)	6.0	6.3 (N=8)	5.8 (N=8)	13.5	12.5 (N=8)	14.6 (N=8)
CUNY	28	85.2	84.1 (N=14)	86.4 (N=14)	7.4	7.9 (N=14)	6.9 (N=14)	7.4	8.1 (N=14)	6.7 (N=14)
2-YEAR	14	84.3	84.8 (N=7)	83.8 (N=7)	9.1	9.5 (N=7)	8.6 (N=7)	6.7	5.7 (N=7)	7.6 (N=7)
4-YEAR	14	86.2	83.3 (N=7)	89.1 (N=7)	5.7	6.2 (N=7)	5.2 (N=7)	8.1	10.5 (N=7)	5.7 (N=7)

reliable. Table 3 also shows that the reader reliability at each of the two scoring sessions hardly differed: 83.9% when the original ES was used and 84.2% when the Refined ES was used. A t-test between these two percentages showed no significant difference. Therefore, it can be said with confidence that the Refined ES does not interfere with reader reliability. For individual scorers, reader reliability ranged from 70.0 (N=2) to 96.7% (N=3).

Table 4 shows the score distributions by essay. Here the data are displayed in order of essay score, not in the order in which the essays were read. As can be seen, the scores assigned by the readers clustered closely around the audit scores, with somewhat greater agreement with audit scores by the CUNY readers than by the non-CUNY readers regardless of the ES version used. This was to be expected because of the CUNY faculty's greater experience with scoring WSAT essays; indeed, this is the reason that both CUNY and non-CUNY faculty were included in the pilot study.

TABLE 4

SCORE DISTRIBUTIONS BY ESSAY: ALL READERS

SCORE	1/1		2/2		3/3		4/4		5/5		6/6		2/3						3/4(3)			4/3(4)			4/5					
ESSAY NUMBER*	5	18	15	27	12	24	2	30	11	28	9	22	1	6	10	17	20	23	8	13	29	4	19	26	3	7	14	16	21	25
1	54	55	30	11									4	6	10	7	13	2												
2	2	1	25	37	13	14							36	36	35	33	37	15	1	4	9	8	1	2			1	1	3	
3			1	7	29	27	13	13	4	2	4	2	15	13	9	15	6	33	31	24	30	19	19	15	6	6	6	7	19	7
4				1	10	14	27	36	8	9	9	8	1	1	2	1		5	19	20	14	27	34	29	32	34	22	28	25	35
5					4	1	14	5	32	24	20	21						1	4	8	2	2	2	8	16	14	21	15	7	12
6							2	2	12	21	23	25							1		1			2	2	2	6	5	2	2

SCORE DISTRIBUTIONS BY ESSAY: CUNY READERS

SCORE	1/1		2/2		3/3		4/4		5/5		6/6		2/3						3/4(3)			4/3(4)			4/5					
ESSAY NUMBER	5	18	15	27	12	24	2	30	11	28	9	22	1	6	10	17	20	23	8	13	29	4	19	26	3	7	14	16	21	25
1	27	28	15	5										1	4	3	3	1												
2	1		13	19	5	4							17	22	20	16	20	4	1		3	2							1	
3				3	17	14	4	4	2		2	1	10	5	4	9	5	18	13	12	16	9	8	8	2	2	1	3	10	3
4				1	4	10	17	19	6	6	4	3	1					4	12	11	9	17	20	16	17	17	13	14	14	19
5					2		5	5	16	11	11	9						1	2	5				3	8	8	13	10	3	6
6							2		4	11	11	15												1	1	1	1	1		

SCORE DISTRIBUTIONS BY ESSAY: NON-CUNY READERS

SCORE	1/1		2/2		3/3		4/4		5/5		6/6		2/3						3/4(3)			4/3(4)			4/5					
ESSAY NUMBER	5	18	15	27	12	24	2	30	11	28	9	22	1	6	10	17	20	23	8	13	29	4	19	26	3	7	14	16	21	25
1	27	27	15	6									4	5	6	4	10	1												
2	1	1	12	18	8	10							19	14	15	17	17	11		4	6	6	1	2			1	1	2	
3			1	4	12	13	9	9	2	2	2	1	5	8	5	6	1	15	18	12	14	10	11	7	4	4	5	4	9	4
4					6	4	10	17	2	3	5	5		1	2	1		1	7	9	5	10	14	13	15	17	9	14	11	16
5					2	1	9		16	13	9	12							2	3	2	2	2	5	8	6	8	5	4	6
6								2	8	10	12	10							1		1			1	1	1	5	4	2	2

*Essay number indicates place of essay in sequence of 30 essays when scored

CONCLUSION

This monograph has described a research process that undertook an a posteriori examination of the Evaluation Scale (ES) of the CUNY Writing Skills Assessment Test (WSAT). The goal of this a posteriori examination was to ascertain if the descriptive criteria of the original ES, instituted in 1978, might be refined in the light of CUNY's four years of experience with large-scale testing at a multi-campus university. The outcome of this study was that a Refined ES was adopted for use starting the spring of 1983. This study was conducted over the period of one year, from May 1981 through June 1982, and involved nearly 100 people in a complex process of collaboration and consensus.

Phase I of this study sought to attempt the development of refined descriptive criteria for the scores of 1 through 6 that comprise the ES. Special emphasis was on trying to draw clear distinctions among all six scores; the original ES combined the description of a 2 and a 3 paper and also combined the description of a 4 and a 5 paper (see Appendix II). This attempt proved to be successful in that the descriptive criteria, based on research-generated data and edited with the participation of many faculty members, resulted in a Refined ES (see Appendix VI) that was deemed suitable for a pilot study by the CUNY Chancellor's Task Force on Writing.

Phase II of this study sought in a pilot study to test the hypothesis that the Refined ES is a revision of the original ES, not a new document. This hypothesis was supported by the pilot study that called for a comparison of the effects of the Refined ES and the original ES on essay scores and on reader reliability. Thus, the established standards of the WSAT are not disturbed by the Refined ES, and many benefits are provided. The faculty involved in the various stages of the editing of the Refined ES felt that face validity of the ES was improved with six separate descriptions. These same people also felt that readers of WSAT essays would be more comfortable in making distinctions between the scores of 2 and 3, of 3 and 4, and of 4 and 5 -- distinctions that traditionally have demanded particularly careful attention on the part of all readers. These faculty, as well as those who participated in discussions following the sessions of the pilot study, also felt that students would now find the language of the ES easier to understand and more useful when preparing for the WSAT. In addition, there was strong conviction among the participants in this study that an updated document would be a stimulating addition to the WSAT, especially for those readers who have been scoring WSAT essays since the inception of the program in 1978. Finally, many people felt that the Refined ES would communicate the CUNY criteria for the WSAT more clearly to other academic institutions interested in the CUNY Freshman Skills Assessment Program and to parents and other concerned members of the public.

In light of the positive findings in the pilot study and the other benefits that a Refined ES offered, the CUNY Chancellor's Task Force on Writing adopted the Refined ES for official use within CUNY. To provide sufficient time for dissemination of this report and orientation to the Refined ES, the Task Force established the spring of 1983 as the time for required use throughout CUNY.

NOTES

[1] The Chancellor determined that these skills were writing, reading and math.

[2] These documents are available from the CUNY Instructional Resource Center. For more information about the WSAT, see CUNY Writing Skills Assessment Test: Student Essays Evaluated and Annotated by the CUNY Task Force on Writing. New York: CUNY Office of Academic Affairs, 1980. For more information on the entire CUNY Freshman Skills Assessment Program, see: Lederman, Marie Jean and Michael Ribaudo, The Basic Skills Effort at The City University of New York. New York: CUNY Office of Academic Affairs, 1981.

[3] For a full discussion, see: Ryzewic, Susan Remmer. The CUNY Writing Assessment: A Three-year Audit Review, 1979-1981. New York: CUNY Instructional Resource Center, 1982.

[4] "Statement on Criteria for Writing Proficiency," Journal of Basic Writing, Fall/Winter 1980, p. 119.

[5] For a clear explanation of category development before and after data collection, see "A Priori and A Posteriori Category Development," in Chapter Five of The Research Process in Education by David J. Fox, Holt, Reinhart and Winston, pp. 144-146.

[6] See Troyka, Lynn Quitman. Diagnosing Students' Writing Abilities: What Writing Samples Can Tell Composition Teachers. New York: CUNY Instructional Resource Center, 1983 (in press).

[7] Conlan, Gertrude. "How the Essay in the CEEB English Composition Test is Scored." Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 1976, p. 6.

[8] Myers, Miles. A Procedure for Writing Assessment and Holistic Scoring. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1980, pp. 39 and 41.

[9] See note 3.

[10] Marilyn Maiz has been extremely helpful throughout this study, handling the administrative details of arranging the panel meetings and, most important, consistently available to the investigator to discuss general impressions and specific information.

[11] The original handwritten versions are on file in the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs, Dean Marie Jean Lederman.

[12] See note 2.

[13] See "Multifactor Experiments Having Repeated Measures on the Same Elements," in Winer, B.J. Statistical Principles in Experimental Design, 2nd ed. New York: McGraw Hill, 1971, pp. 514-603.

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX I

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
WRITING SKILLS ASSESSMENT TEST

DIRECTIONS

You will have fifty minutes to plan and write the essay assigned below. (You may wish to use your fifty minutes in the following way: 10 minutes planning what you are going to write; 30 minutes writing; 10 minutes rereading and correcting what you have written.)

You should express your thoughts clearly and organize your ideas so that they will make sense to a reader. Correct grammar and sentence structure are important.

Write your essay on the lined pages of your booklet. You may use the inside of the front cover of the booklet for preliminary notes.

You must write your essay on one of the following assignments. Read each one carefully and then choose either A or B.

A. It always strikes me as a terrible shame to see young people spending so much of their time staring at television. If we could unplug all the TV sets in America, our children would grow up to be healthier, better educated, and more independent human beings.

Do you agree or disagree? Explain and illustrate your answer from your own experience, your observations of others, or your reading.

B. Older people bring to their work a lifetime of knowledge and experience. They should not be forced to retire, even if keeping them on the job cuts down on the opportunities for young people to find work.

Do you agree or disagree? Explain and illustrate your answer from your own experience, your observations of others, or your reading.

APPENDIX II

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

FRESHMAN SKILLS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Writing Skills Assessment Test Evaluation Scale

6

The essay is competently organized and the ideas are expressed in appropriate language. A sense of pattern of development is present from beginning to end. The writer supports assertions with explanation or illustrations.

Sentences reflect a command of syntax within the ordinary range of standard written English. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are generally correct.

5 - 4

The writer introduces some point or idea and demonstrates an awareness that development or illustration is called for.

The essay presents a discernible pattern of organization, even if there are occasional digressions.

The essay demonstrates sufficient command of vocabulary to convey, without serious distortion or excessive simplification, the range of the writer's ideas.

Sentences reflect a sufficient command of syntax to ensure reasonable clarity of expression. The writer generally avoids both the monotony of rudimentary syntax and the incoherence created by tangled syntax.

The writer demonstrates through punctuation an understanding of the boundaries of the sentence.

The writer spells the common words of the language with a reasonable degree of accuracy. Exceptions can be made for the so-called spelling "demons" which frequently trouble even an advanced writer.

The writer shows the ability to use regularly, but not necessarily faultlessly, the common forms of agreement and of grammatical inflection in standard written English.

3 - 2

An idea or point is suggested, but is undeveloped or presented in a purely repetitious way.

The pattern of the essay is somewhat random and relationships between sentences and paragraphs are rarely signaled.

The essay is restricted to a very narrow range of language, so that the vocabulary chosen frequently does not serve the needs of the writer.

The syntax of the essay is not sufficiently stable to ensure reasonable clarity of expression. The syntax often is rudimentary or tangled.

The writer frequently commits errors of punctuation which obscure sentence boundaries.

The writer spells the common words of the language with only intermittent accuracy.

The essay reveals recurrent grammatical problems; if there are only occasional problems, this may be due to the extremely narrow range of syntactical choices the writer has used.

1

The essay suffers from general incoherence and has no discernible pattern of organization. It displays a high frequency of error in the regular features of standard written English. Lapses in punctuation, spelling, and grammar often frustrate the reader. Or, the essay is so brief that any reasonably accurate judgment of the writer's competence is impossible.

APPENDIX III

III.A

QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
Bayside, New York 11364

May 15, 1981: CUNY Panel
9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

PANEL REVIEW FOR POSSIBLE REFINEMENT OF THE EVALUATION-SCALE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE CUNY WRITING SKILLS ASSESSMENT TEST

conducted by Lynn Quitman Troyka
for the Office of Academic Affairs, Dean Marie Jean Lederman

---

1. Introduction of panel members

2. Explanation of purpose and procedures

3. Development of criteria for <u>each of six points</u> of an essay evaluation scale

   a. written from our teaching experience, without reference to samples of student writing

   b. discussion

   c. revised -- as necessary -- with reference to samples of student writing, rated 1-6

   d. discussion

4. Comparison of our scales with present CUNY scale

5. Discussion about the <u>product</u> of the panel review

6. Discussion about the <u>process</u> of the panel review

7. General discussion

QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
Bayside, New York 11364

June 5, 1981: Non-CUNY Panel
9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

PANEL REVIEW FOR POSSIBLE REFINEMENT OF THE EVALUATION-SCALE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE CUNY WRITING SKILLS ASSESSMENT TEST

conducted by Lynn Quitman Troyka
for the Office of Academic Affairs, Dean Marie Jean Lederman

---

1. Introduction of panel members
2. Explanation of purpose and procedures
3. Development of criteria for <u>each of six points</u> of an essay evaluation scale
   a. written from our teaching experience, without reference to samples of student writing
   b. discussion
   c. revised -- as necessary -- with reference to samples of student writing, rated 1-6
   d. discussion
4. Comparison of our scales with present CUNY scale
5. Discussion about the <u>product</u> of the panel review
6. Discussion about the <u>process</u> of the panel review
7. General discussion

EXAMPLE OF DESCRIPTIONS NOT USEFUL FOR CUNY

Rubric for the Impromptu Writing Sample

6 - Addresses the topic fluently and maintains a generally consistent point of view.

- Explains why, describes where and tells what, using supportive details for each.
- Show evidence of good organization
- Has few mechanical errors.

5 - The paper is well-written but is lacking in one area.

- The paper is mechanically competent.

4 - Overall, this is a satisfactory paper but it is weak in two areas.

3 - This paper is understandable but is weak in three areas.

2 - The paper is difficult to understand because of serious weaknesses in three or more areas OR the paper is extremely superficial.

1 - The paper is totally incompetent because it is weak in all areas.

REFINEMENT/VALIDATION PANEL

How The Test Is Scored

All essays are rated according to the CUNY Evaluation Scale, a one-to-six scale in which six is the highest rating. The numerical ratings are accompanied on the scale by descriptions of features of writing that characterize student essays receiving the ratings. These features, it must be emphasized, reflect the test's goal, which is to distinguish the minimum degree of competence in writing needed in order to begin work in a freshman-level college composition course. A rating of four or better indicates that a reader has judged that the essay meets the CUNY writing standard.

The one and six ratings are described briefly, because these scores refer to essays that are clearly acceptable or unacceptable. The middle range scores (two through five) are described in more detail to help readers make more accurate decisions about writers' competence in the range where those decisions are hardest to make.

Each essay is read by two readers. The essay meets the CUNY writing standard if each reader rates the essay at least four, for a total score of at least eight. If one reader rates the essay at three or below and the other rates it at four or above, a third reader resolves the difference. All readers participate in preliminary reading sessions using essays previously evaluated by the University faculty committee that prepared the test.

source: "Student Information Bulletin" of the CUNY Freshman Skills Assessment Program (underline added).

SCALE

6 (high)

5

4 (pass into freshman English)

3

2

1 (low)

APPENDIX IV

Each folder contains the same essays. They are:

letter code	score
AA	1
L	1
A	2
DD	2
AC	2
3B	3
3A	3
AD	3
GH	3
4A	4
4B	4
D	4
AE	4
KB	5
B	5
BK	6
AG	6

(1)

LAA

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

I think if you working and get a lot of money you will be succesful in life because you will get what ever you want and do what ever come in your mind + also people will be greatdful to you + you will be greatdful to them too. Cl kan agree and one way and cl am not agree and the other way because you don't + have to be succesful to have a lot of money you could work and get the money for, or you could be succesful in + don't get a lot of money But this is my own experience for that is what cl think cl don't know if others think the same as with me because to me succesful don't mean nothing to me because cl could be succesful and not making money and not doing anything too. And cl hope you understand what I AM tried to said to you is not that cl don't like to be succesful cl would to but if cl am not what i can cl do.

(1) Small Town / Large City L

I Agree with the one dealing with - "thy living in A small town where nothing ever happens" BECAUSE I feel THAT BOREDNESS is A VERY unhealthy EXPERIENCE. To HAVE to live some where, where there is nothing in the world to do, for example no movies different kinds of things no stores with A Big Sign that SAYS PLAYland or Kidd Park. To be some where day in And day out where you have nothing to do but go Shopping, OR take A WALK in the field. Certainly EVERY-one don't feel the SAME AS I do. Some people like the SmALL towns And the QUIET living AND then AGAIN Some people don't And I am one of these who like the City where there is lots of peop in the ATMOSPHERE EVERYONE knows that the Big Apple HAS PLENTY of EXCITEMENT EVEN though they OVER look the NOISE And dirt REGARDLESS to them its just A daily thing THAT goes on EACH And EVERY day AS long AS there is Something to do and some where to go. Beside who like to be BORE

(2) Small Town / Large City A

Essay A

well first of all I disagree with the passage because, it is not all that exciting living in New York City. I don't mean it like that. Look at the crime rate, people can't even walk the streets with out being robbed. All right you talk about no one should complain, about being in New York, but they should try living for six months in a small town where nothing ever happen. you should stop to think that maybe since it is so quite over they nothing is happening. well that is where I are very wrong. They could be lots of things happen just like in New York, but they probably no how to maintain every thing under control better than New York. you can not judge a small town just because its quite and maybe it is nothing happen. New York has a lot of excitement and different things to offer. I have met people who came up here for visit and got robbed, and etc, And the first thing they

say is that they rather where they live, because at least they don't have to worry about being robbed, rape, ~~[illegible]~~ getting up, etc. Because when I came up here alot of things were strange to me, like back in Jamaica we could leave our doors open, nobody would ever think of coming in, but ~~[illegible]~~ when I came I saw people have so many locks on the doors, the doors would closed and I would wonder why the doors are closed then after my family explained it to me, I got to understand better. New York is alright but all those things you said some of them are true but not all of them. It is a very nice place to live but you just have to be very careful of what you do in New York.

(2) WHAT IS SUCCESS? DD

Succes shouldn't be measured in terms of money while money is important. It has it's advantages and disadvantages.

Money if used wisely can make life comfortable materialistically and also help to make life comfortable if one lives to be a senior citizen. It should be shared to help those who are less fortunate. There is lots of joy in giving. However, some people don't like to give and very often although they have money the unhappiest steps into their life.

Money makes some people very demanding. If that demand is not accepted they become arrogant and out of desperation cruelty take hold of their inner mind.

If I become successful financially I will be happy by being charitable to those who are really in need such as Senior Citizen who have no one come to their rescue especially during the winter season.

Some people with money lost their sense of love for Human being and that's the one possession money can't buy.

57

AC

(2) Should Police Carry Guns?

FORM: WG

TOPIC: B

Armed policemen are dangerous. The numbers of cases in which a policeman have shot a suspected criminals or innocent bystanders. For this reacas policemen should be forbidden to carry guns. I disagree that policemen should be forbidden to carry guns. If they don't carry guns, how in the World could they help us. What happens if a criminal is pointing a gun at a person. And the policemen come, what they going to do, maybe get killed too. Why, because they don't have guns. For this matters they have to carry guns. Policeman are diffrent from any body else. Because the policeman are the only one to carry guns. And that's the only way they could protected us and themself too. If they shot a suspected criminals or innocent bystanders they didn't really mean to killed them or hurt them. I mean they just human being too. If we live in World where people could be trusted, then I would say why should a policeman carry gun. But no, this World where we live is full of Bad people who we could not trust or be nice to them. That's why a policeman should carry a gun.

(3) TV 3B

ESSAY 3B

(1) I agree that television does have an harmful effect on young people. (2) The young people will watch television then to do homework or prepare themselves for a test. (3) They will make up excuses for not doing the homework or prepare themselves for the test, the excuse might be one of the following: it doesn't matter if I fail the test I will still pass the class, it's only one homework assignment I will be missing, or the teacher shouldn't fail me because I missed one or failed one test. (4) This is how the young people feel, they would watch television before they would read a book. (5) I know they feel that way because all my friends are like that and I use to be like that. (6) I use to watch television then to read a book or do homework until I realized how important an education was. (7) Watching television wouldn't make me do better in school it makes me do worse watching television wouldn't get me a job.

(8) Television changes some peoples life styles they try to be like the person on the television. (9) After the program is over they might say I want to be like him or her. (10) They don't realize that is a person playing the role of a character. (11) If the character does something the young person might think that it is done like that in real life. (12) The young person could get hurt doing something that they might seen on television. (13) Then they wouldn't understand why it don't happen the same way for them. (14) Until someone explains to them that certain this on television only happens on television.

(3) TV 3A

ESSAY 3A

(1) I disagree with the statement that television has a harmful effect on young people. (2) If we unplug all the TV set, it may result in an opposite way rather than it said in the passage. (3) This result maybe that children become ignorant and blind to the modern society. (4) Another words, they will not know what is going on in this world by means of news cast on television.

(5) However, it's undeniable to say television also has a harmful effect to the children because of some series shown on TV that deal with actions and violences. (6) But besides those series, there are programs that are shown to provide the young people the necessary knowledge and education. (7) These programs are often seen on channel thirteen which is considered an educational broadcasting company. (8) Many programs shown on which are excellent and interesting, and providing real and scientific knowledges to the viewers, such as NOVA, VISA and many others. (9) I have been watching these programs many times, although not becoming omniscient, I now understand more, so do the other people, the gradual advancement and improvement of this world.

(10) It is not necessary to have this kind of programs only on this public TV company. (11) Good programs can also be seen on those commercial TV broadcasting companies too. (12) There are certain hours that those channels will present some special series that are good to be watched. (13) For example, There are programs like "The Last of the Wild", "In Search of . . .", etc. shown on these channels.

(14) Again, it is not necessary to watch just these excellent series. (15) There are news broadcasting on most of the channels too, and which gives the viewers the events of the world. (16) A television is good for those who are illiterary but able to listen and for those who are lazy enough to pick up a copy of a newspaper.

(17) It is true that children in recent years have imitated the characters on the TV shows and done the things these characters did. (18) Sometimes crimes are resulted. (19) It is also true that children become lazier on their homework but spend their times on TV. (20) Besides these weakness that the TV provides, remember, there are good programs described above. (21) There is only one way to stop the belief of a harmful effect of television, which is to find a way to halt those violent shows on TV and concentrate on those more educational programs.

(3) Children Learn Violence AD

A. If parents who are angry and frustrated beat their children or each other, the children will grow up thinking that physical violence is the only way of dealing with their own anger and frustration. When they will have their own children they will do the same because that was the way their parents brought them up. They won't have time to talk with their children when they want to express their thoughts. They will treat the children like an animal, beat them up for every little thing. They will make them children do bad things, For instance; they will beat up their classmate. Some parents do not realize that they are an example for their kids. In this world, kids are very violent, so the parents have to watch their steps because if they do somethings bad in front of the children, they would do the same. Their children won't have respect for other people. Their children will act like a brute because they don't have a good parents to look after them. When their children will be among people, they won't know how to behave. Their

selves because their parents did not give them a good example. The parents will feel ashame because their children are not to do have no career in life.

(3) TV GH

I agree that Television does have a bad or harmful effect on young people. I myself find that Television had a bad effect on me.

I use to watch Television at least 6 hours a day and more if I had the time free. I found that I could sing an say every commercial there was. The commercials ~~and~~ which had had Programs was brain washing me to make me feel that I wanted something that I really didn't want.

The Television programs made me think of violent things such as how I could commit the same crime that I was watching with out getting caught like the guy or girl in the program. I also felt that the programs that I watched made me feel less educational than I was.

I too feel like the Children programs such as Room and Sesame Street has a lot of Violence, one of the muppits are always hitting the other. They also use bad Grammer, but they feel they made up for that by teaching the children words and numbers.

In the course that I take in school at the present ~~two~~ time called Film Study and Broadcasting tells ~~of~~ and shows us how children prefer to watch

6H

Television, the way I see it, is. But it also tells us why. It says that Americans are drawn to the simpler way of life. The less work is physically and mentally. They pay the only thing you have to put while watching TV is your eyes and ears. The program is already picked, the answers to any questions are always given at the end of the program.

In the course they tell me that television is for lazy people or people that just don't care.

(4) TV (4A)

Essay 4A

(1) Television has a harmful effect on young people. (2) If a child is watching television he cannot explore the outside world for himself. (3) The violence on these shows could make him believe there is no good only bad and television takes away the child's ability to imagine, think or play.

(4) If a child is in the habit of watching television he cannot use his sense of curiosity to learn about things around him. (5) The television does this for him, he does not initiate this feeling on his own. (6) It might be good for a child to see a flower, for example, on t.v. but nothing can show how it really is, to take it in your own hands and describe it for yourself. (7) This is what t.v. is taking away from today's children. (8) Their sense to learn and to explore on their own. (9) These young people are depending on t.v. for something which they have already, but just do not use.

(10) Most of what is shown on television today is violence. (11) Since young people are watching so much t.v. violence could be the only thing that appeals to them and they carry this distruction to their own every day lives. (12) Children watching violence to much could get used to it, not care about real murders or wouldn't think a second time about picking a gun and killing somebody because his hero "Kojak" constantly does it on t.v. and he wants to be just like him. (13) Young children might not know the difference betweem the good guy or bad ones and sometimes on t.v. the bad guys are the heros the roles have changed considerably.

(14) Television takes away the child's ability to imagine, play and think for himself. (15) If a child is constantly watch t.v. he doesn't have time to imagine or play or think for him. elf. (16) Playing is good for a young child because he learns how to share and understand others by the use of toys. (17) By thinking a child can determine his values not use his favorite t.v. characters' values which might be invalid ones. (18) Imagining is taken away from the child because of t.v. advancement children can now go off to those far of lands that they used to imagine.

(19) Television has a distructive effect on a child. (20) He becomes addicted to it and does not go, outside to explore. (21) The child can take on invalid values seen on t.v. like violence. (22) T.V. can take away the ability for the child to use his own mind in everyday life.

(4) TV (4B)

ESSAY 4B

(1) I agree strongly with the passage, simply because it is very true. (2) It is said that Americans spend about five hours a day watching television. (3) Young people can be influenced easily by television. (4) They tend to believe what they see. (5) One example of this would be an incident that happened in Florida. (6) A young boy was watching a popular police show and saw one person kill another, the boy, probably feeling it would be alright, murdered a friend of his.

(7) The passage also states that it is not healthy watching too much T.V. (8) I agree with this also. (9) People tend to just sit back and watch others, in sporting events for example. (10) From this people can become very lazy, which I feel is not at all healthy.

(11) The passage says that "IF we could unplug all the T.V. sets in America, we would be better off. (12) I cannot believe this because without the use of television we are losing many things, such as educational shows for children. (13) They help give the child a better understanding of the way the world in which he lives in operates. (14) We see a variety of Nature programs which help us understand how other thing live in the world.

(15) I do agree that television can corrupt the minds of young people. (16) They can learn many improper things that they do not need in life.

(17) I remember when I was younger that I would think that if it was on television and often people do things like murders, robberies, hijacking and other thing of that nature, I would feel thing like that happen all the time and that it was proper.
(18) I also agree strongly with idea of having a family hour. (19) In this time children and young people can watch worthwhile programs. (20) When it gets later into the evening, programs come on which are made for the older and mature person.

(21) In conclusion I would like to say that television has many good and bad points. (22) Television has been around for a long time and it will be around for many more years to come. (23) Maybe in the future there will be "perfect television, where there will be programs to suit the needs of everyone in America.

(4) Children Learn Violence D

I do not believe that children learn violent behavior from their parents. It's true, that a child [redacted] is what he lives, But living with violent parents doesn't [redacted] mean that he will become violent because of them.

A child's violence can come from something other than violent parents. A childs violence can come from our groups and his neighborhood. The child can be with his peers, they may be bored and need money. So they go and snatch a woman's purse. This child can be alone one day and need money, so he goes and snatches a woman's purse. The child has learned from his peers (not his parents) that if he [redacted] wants money he [redacted] will snatch a purse

I knew [redacted] a boy who was a victim of child abuse, and was living in a house with fighting parents. I have seen this boy's [redacted] parents abusing him. and I have seen the parents fighting But, no matter how [redacted] frustrated he might have been he never used violence as a way of dealing with this problem. →

This boy is now 20 years old and. He attends Brooklyn College. He does not lives with his parents but, to get [redacted] today [redacted], he didn't use violence in dealing with his problems.

I totally disagree that children learn violent behavior from their parents. The reason for my disagreement is that I have [redacted] this boy since we were kids. Never in my life have I ever seen him take out his anger on anyone. Through my own observation of him I can say that "children do not learn violent behavior from parents.

(4) Working Women AE

Its truly a fact that more women are working today than ever before but I can't see work coming between parents and their children. A very small child ~~between~~ between the ages of one year to three years hardly ever gets confuse of not having mommy around. He may miss her at times if she wasn't always a working mother but eventually he or she would realize that she is going to come back and that the period of time in which she leaves gives him the chance to make friends at the Baby Sitter and to explore all the things around him without having a worring mom around.

I have a child of my own and going to school is like going to work, in the sense that I have to leave him. He understands and we share a special joy when I see him on evenings. I allows me to feel wanted and love. Normally if I was with him everyday from morning to Bedtime I wouldn't be able to see the real feelings he has for me.

My mother worked all my life and I can't ever remember any regrets. She was always home for dinner, we shared every exciting moment that should be shared between a mother and a child. I know that at times mothers who work can become exhusted because she is now taking care of two jobs but she can explain to her children that she's fatigue and that ~~it~~ she may not be able to proceed with her

daily activities around the home.

Mothers need just as much security as children do. They need to have confidence in that they can do more than be a mother. Being a mother is a ~~terrific~~ terrific job and one that any woman should be proud of. But she needs more.

Woman get tired of doing the same things every day, like knowing that at six o'clock she must start dinner. In other words she needs to ~~be~~ feel free.

I do beleive that children grow to accept changes and they would respect their mother. They would see her not only as a mom but as the mother who goes to work to give to her children the things that make them happy and most of all the mom who comes home to them when her daily work outside the home is over.

(5) TV KB

(1) I disagree with this passage. (2) The writer of the passage believes that the children of America are in many ways harmed by watching television and would be better off without it. (3) I agree that excessive television watching is not good for anyone. (4) Children who watch too much TV tend to become lazy and show a lack of imagination, and therefore they are harmed by it. (5) Television can also benefit children in many ways. (6) They seem to learn things much quicker and at a younger age by watching educational TV shows such as "Sesame Street" and "Electric Company," than children who don't watch these shows. (7) Shows like "Sesame Street" teach them things through repetition and they catch a child's attention easily through their use of bright colors, cartoons, music and puppets. (8) Children enjoy these shows and also learn from them.

(9) I believe that children should be guided by their parents as to what shows they can and cannot watch. (10) Children should watch shows that are suitable for them, that is, simple enough for them to understand but not so simple that they are bored by it. (11) They should not be allowed to watch shows that are excessively violent because these shows leave a bad impression on them. (12) I don't think that this pertains just to children, though, because adults are affected by these shows too.

(13) From my own observation, I have concluded that children between the ages of three and ten watch the most television. (14) These are very important years because the child's whole character is formed during these years. (15) If the child watches too much TV it can be harmful to him, especially if he is watching "junk" TV shows, that is shows with no educational value whatsoever. (16) Later on, it seems that young adults seem to drift away from TV and don't start watching it to an excess again until they hit about thirty. (17) By this time, many of them have children of their own and are sitting down to enjoy it with them.

(18) In conclusion, I think that television watching has both advantages and disadvantages. (19) Children can really benefit from watching TV and I think the children of the generations will be smarter than we could haver ever dreamed possible.

(5) CHILDREN LEARN VIOLENCE B

I agree that children learn violent behavior from their parents. Children can be influenced very easily, and when it's their own parents the children would most definitely act as they do.

Children look up to their parents and tend to imitate their behavior and actions. When they see their parents arguing and these arguments mostly, if not always, end in physical violence, the child therefore assumes that this is the way they are expected to act.

Television and movies do influence children also — only not as much. Children have heros, and when these heros act violently they try to imitate them. However, if the children watching television and these movies come from families where anger & frustrations are talked out or dealt with in a non-violent atmosphere, then the children will know how they really should act. They will realize television and movies are only fantasy, as are the people in them, and that in reality it's best to be non-violent since their own parents are.

B

If a child from a home where physical violence exists views violence on television or in movies, it really wouldn't make a difference to him one way or the other since he already thinks physical violence is right.

Therefore it is the parents, and not television and movies, who make the biggest impressions on children. We can only hope that children from violent homes will some day come to realize how wrong it is to behave as their parents do or did and deal with their problems differently.

(6) TV BK

Essay 6

(1) Television is a modern form of entertainment which has become so popular that almost every American family owns at least one T.V. (2) Many people enjoy watching movies and variety shows on television, in the comfort of their own homes. (3) If we didn't own televisions, we'd be going out more at night, spending money at theaters and seeing plays. (4) Although these are enjoyable forms of entertainment, it is usually more convenient and economical to stay at home. (5) Television also offers a variety of entertainment while a single theater does not.

(6) Since television has such a great popularity, educators are striving to offer shows which provide education and not just entertainment. (7) Young people, especially, are very attached to watching television, since they have grown up with it. (8) For this reason, it is important that the daily practice of television viewing be put to good uses.

(9) Unfortunately, television is often misused. (10) Young people are allowed to see and hear things which they don't understand, and this can be harmful. (11) This is why it is most important that parents supervise what their children watch. (12) The businessmen behind television, as with every form of entertainment, offer what the public wants to see. (13) This is how they make their money. (14) Therefore, parents and educators should encourage their children to watch shows which provide some educational as well as entertaining value.

(15) Children often choose to watch cartoons which provide little or no educational value. (16) Instead, these shows are usually based on some sort of violence. (17) Since children are easily swayed, these shows can prove to be harmful on a child's outlook on life and on his relationship with others. (18) Children should be encouraged instead to watch shows like Sesame Street, which offers educational entertainment. (19) This is an excellent program: viewers can learn how to build relationships, how different nationalities can live together in harmony, how to count and read on an elementary level. (20) All these things are taught by colorful puppets and happy people and funny cartoons. (21) From my personal experience in watching several children viewing Sesame Street, the show is one of the best children's shows available.

(22) Children use their creativity which evolves from what they see and hear around them. (23) Parents should put good television programs to use by helping children to relate to the programs. (24) Of course, other sources of entertainment and education, such as books and outdoor trips are also important.

(25) Like anything else in life, too much television may be harmful. (26) But treated in the right respect and with proper guidance, television can be the great invention that it was meant to be.

(6) Writing Today AG

Many young people today do not write well. Perhaps telephones, television, and tape recorders can be blamed for this. I don't think so. The blame can not be put on material things, but on a society that allows children to pass through school without learning basic literary skills Technology is making it easy and fast to communicate without use of a pen and paper, but basic writing skills are still a necessary way of life.

The Board of Education is making an effort to better the writing skills of students throught New York Competency tests are now mandatory for graduation in most city high schools. I think they are wasting time and energy in the wrong place The students should be taught when they are young, not tested when they are about to graduate. As a student gets older and still can't read or write, it gets harder to learn. Catch it when they're young, so even if they end up dropping out of school they will still have the basics.

I have a friend who is eighteen years old He reads poorly, and can bearly write It is sad when he can't understand written words on a commercial, but it is even sadder when he can't read the label of a medicine bottle I have noticed that my friend

AG

becomes embarassed when he has to ask help to read something. But is it his fault? He was pushed through school without learning the basics, and now he must get by with minimal knowledge No one seemed to care about his education; the extent of his writing skills is to write his name. Hopefully he will some day master the skills of reading and writing, because despite all the advances made with technology, literacy skills are still necessary to write a check, read a contract, write a receipt, and much more

What is the answer? Perhaps the people designing televisions and telephones can design a machine to make reading and writing easy to learn. Maybe surrounding can be made to get people interested in learning. As we progress in new ways of communication, I hope we can progress in our education system Perhaps Someday an answer can be found that will solve all of our problems. Maybe twenty years from now it won't be necessary to read or write. It may become an extinct way of life

APPENDIX V

Notes on the transcripts of the panelists' descriptive criteria:

1 The first seven scales (pages 74 - 82) are by the CUNY panelists. The second seven scales (pages 83 - 92) are by the non-CUNY panelists. Within those groups, the scales are not given in alphabetical order by author so that confidentiality of authorship is preserved.

2 No editing was done, but the investigator did at times add a few words always shown in parentheses to aid clarity.

3 As a result of the above, parentheses, when used by panelists, were changed to dashes.

4 Some panelists wrote criteria from 1-6, while others wrote from 6-1.

5 One CUNY panelist and one non-CUNY panelist did not have time to finish, and so a few descriptions were not done. But neither panelist indicated that this had anything to do with a lack of ease with six points on the scale; it was the time limit that stopped them.

6. All panelists gave permission to have their transcripts included in this report. The investigator wishes to thank them for their participation on the panels as well as for their willingness -- when the request was made weeks after the panels met -- to permit their materials to be included here.

7. These materials were written as drafts, and should be read as such. That is, no time was available for the panelists to polish their prose. The purpose of the panel meetings was to try to get answers to the questions given on page 9 of this report, not to get edited prose.

8. *All material typed in "script" typeface is material added after the panelists had listened to the group discussion and had read a set of sample student essays scored according to CUNY standards. (At the panel meetings, the panelists used red or green ink to make the entries so that they would clearly be seen as later additions.)*

CUNY PANELIST NO. 1

1 The thinking is generally confused, disorganized, and completely undeveloped. Basic sentence *and word* errors are rampant. *Words are missing or misused.* The little that is written is difficult to understand; *this is a very important characteristic.*

2 The writer has made some attempt at developing an idea. It may be somewhat disorganized and is likely to contain many grammatical and mechanical errors *(both at the sentence and the word level).* Yet the reader should be able to understand *most of* what has been written. *An occasional sentence or two may be difficult to follow.*

3 This essay should demonstrate some sense of basic organization and development of ideas. Although this essay is likely to contain several sentence errors -- a pattern of fragments, run-ons, verb errors, etc. -- it should not contain as many as the 1 (score) or 2 (score) essay does. *There should not be many missing or misused words.* The reader should have no difficulty in following the writer's argument.

4 This essay should show some sense of basic organization -- proper paragraphing, generally staying on the topic of a paragraph, etc. Some attempt should have been made to develop the points with examples, facts, etc. This paper may contain an occasional error of basic sentence structure -- a fragment, a run-on, etc. -- but there should not be a pattern of error--several fragments or run-ons. There may also be an occasional error in other aspects of grammar or mechanics -- e.g., verb agreement -- but again, there should not be a pattern of errors.

5 This paper should be well organized and some specific information -- facts, examples, etc. -- should be given in support of the points made. There should be a minimal number of grammatical and mechanical errors. *There should be a sense of unity -- transitions, etc. -- and perhaps some variety in sentence structure.*

6 Although not a perfect essay, a 6 (paper) should be well organized, coherent, and each point should be decently supported with specific examples, facts, and other forms of information. There should be a minimal number of grammatical and mechanical errors. *Sentence structure should be varied. Unity should be apparent through the use of transitions, pronouns, etc.*

CUNY PANELIST NO. 2

6 Essay successfully develops a point or point of view that is more sophisticated than other papers. The essay addresses the complexity, subtlety or potential ambiguity of the topic. There is a definite angle of vision on the subject which the student successfully maintains throughout. The student marshals evidence or support in an orderly coherent manner. There are very few grammatical or mechanical errors.

5 The student attempts to develop a fairly complex or subtle point, but unlike a 6 (paper) he will have more trouble laying out his evidence and he may get tripped up in the complexity and ambiguity of the topic. (A paper may make) a more subtle point but (show) weakness in development and transitions. There may be a few mistakes but they do not interfere with reading.

4 This essay expresses a definite point of view toward the material; the point is usually a relatively simple one. The student presents, typically, several illustrations or examples to support his point of view. There may be some digression or repetition, but the student shows he has a sense of the essay -- of development and closure. (A paper may be) error free but (have) poor development. There are mechanical and grammatical mistakes but they are not frequent or serious enough to seriously distract the reader. The dialect errors I consider more of a problem than sentence boundaries -- simply changing the punctuation.

3 The essay attempt to develop a relatively simple point of view which may or may not be stated adequately. (A paper may) fail to frame the topic so that the student can acknowledge the harmful effects while arguing benefits are greater without appearing to ramble -- as in sample essays 3A and 3B. Ideas may be more complex in toto than any sentence that adequately summarizes them. The illustrations or examples or reasons are the obvious ones. To be a 3 (paper) rather than a 4 (paper), the student will ramble. repeat himself, contradict himself without indicated he realized he has done so, or otherwise lose control of an orderly development. This turns out to be a weakness in working out transitions and a lack of the kind of word-seeding that carries the reader forward while summarizing what has gone before. Alternatively, the student may develop the "simple" paper, but have so many mechanical and grammatical errors that he needs intensive work with copy-reading.

2 This essay botches the development of a simple idea. The illustrations or examples are in some way inadequate: too few, off the point, too little developed, repetitious. Or the student loses track of his point. There are frequent grammatical and mechanical mistakes so that the reader must occasionally reread or "listen with his third ear" to catch the student's meanings. A paper might be scored a 2 rather than a 1 because of greater length, but the development is not systematic or orderly. A typical 2 (paper) fails to frame the essay with an appropriate opening which sets the topic or his point of view; sometimes a first sentence can miscue the reader about his point of view.

CONTINUED.....

CUNY NO. 2, cont.

1 The student writes a very short piece and/or there is little or no sense of development and/or there are frequent grammatical and mechanical mistakes of the sort that interfere with processing the writing. *(A paper might fail) to define a key term so that it is used in a contradictory sense which the reader must sort out.*

CUNY PANELIST NO. 3 (Note: This panelist wrote criteria for all six points on the scale, but rather than inserting additions or corrections this panelist chose to rewrite the criteria for scores 1-4. Below are the rewritten versions for 1-4 and the first versions for 5 and 6. The rewritten versions contain all points mentioned in the first versions, with some elaborations and additions.)

1 *The absence of the most fundamental rules of grammar and/or any sense of organization is extremely pronounced. The paper will exhibit either a random discursiveness and repetition or be so short as to generate almost no adequate text. Spelling and syntax are generally extremely flawed. Primary language interference may be very obvious.*

2 *The paper exhibits a minimal sense of organization, but is generally rambling and may be prone to errors in logic, sequence, etc. Grammatical, syntactical and spelling errors are wide-spread and often repeated. Often the point of view is not well defined. Both style and a sense of appropriately useful vocabulary are usually lacking.*

3 *The paper has a greater degree of organization yet often does not completely fulfill its own demands. Errors in grammar, syntax, and spelling are often still in evidence in sufficient numbers to interfere with the sense of the essay. Point of view may suffer a lack of focus and repetition and discursiveness and logical errors will often be found. Generally speaking, a sense of style and an attempt at appropriate vocabulary are still not present.*

4 *The paper shows a basic understanding of the demands of the essay form and generally fulfills those demands. Though errors in grammar, syntax, style and spelling diminish its effectiveness and interfere with the presentation, they are not so prevelant as to interfere with the usually consistent point of view.*

5 The paper shows a good control of language and any grammatical or stylistic problems are not so frequent as to indicate otherwise. Organization is present and helps to advance the writer's point of view. Vocabulary is consistent and to the point.

6 The paper demonstrates an easy fluency and control of the language. It shows both grammatical competence and evidence of style. Considerations of form and content are equal and well balanced. Spelling and punctuation errors are not a major issue.

V.D

CUNY PANELIST NO. 4

6 Good organization; knowledge of paragraph structure; no serious sentence structure or grammatical errors; unity and coherence; has something interesting to say and the ability to communicate it to the reader; mature vocabulary.

5 Generally well organized essay of suitable length; answers the question and produces convincing arguments; no serious sentence structure or grammar errors; correct paragraphs and supporting detail; clarity and coherence; should get above the personal and trivial level -- e.g., my landlord, my disco in New York City; *has something interesting to say and one can read it without feeling constantly jarred by the mistakes; no clumsy or confusing sentences; possibly one or two sentence structure mistakes if no grammar errors -- but not both.*

4 Must have proper paragraphs unless really well written otherwise; must be grammatically correct on the whole; must answer the question and make some attempt at producing good arguments; in other words there can be some weakness but not to the extent that it overwhelms any positive factors. There should, in any case, be a clear line of thought *and no major contradictions. In a well organized paper up to three sentence faults acceptable but not if in conjunction with grammar mistakes -- verb endings, subject-verb agreement, etc.; I feel that if a student makes sentence structure mistakes and grammar mistakes, he should not get above a 3 (score) -- however good the paper is otherwise.*

3 Attempts to answer the question with convincing arguments but has a number of serious problems -- e.g., sentence structure, grammar; or possibly quite well written but extremely short; or writes grammatically but is incapable of producing a unified answer that makes *good* sense; *has something to say but essay is unsatisfactory because of certain shortcomings; in some ways below minimally acceptable standard.*

2 Serious sentence structure or grammatical problems; some ESL problems OK if has attempted to write an adequate answer; answer may be contradictory; organization and paragraph structure poor; no attempt to rise above the lowest personal level; *very difficult to read because no clear line of thought because of serious errors.*

1 Does not begin to be an adequate essay; possibly serious ESL problem; very poor knowledge of sentence structure, paragraphs, and grammar; *has nothing to say; contradictory and repetitive.*

V.E

CUNY PANELIST NO. 5

1 This paper shows the student as unable to write more than a paragraph, or if more (than a paragraph) a paper is so flawed in sentence structure or choice of language that it is often incomprehensible sentence by sentence. The student seems to have little useful written language or familiarity with standard English patterns. The paper may seem to reflect some grasp of the question, or the written response may be inappropriate to the question; *that is, after perhaps one quick glance at a phrase in the question, the student heads off completely in his/her own direction. Lots of disjunction between pronunciation and spelling of words -- "astmospeare" -- though this kind of spelling also shows up in 2 (score) papers.*

2 The student seems to have understood the question and to attempt a focused answer, but what one reads appears to be a transcription of oral responses. There is a rambling organization, if one can call it that, and "sequence" is scattered or by association, rather than logical. There are frequent sentence boundary problems, a use of "street" talk, a real confusion between concrete evidence and theoretical generalization. *(A paper may use) "well" as an opening word -- conversational. Writer tends to use lists rather than selecting suitable evidence for each point made or in "developing" one example gets away from the topic into the process of narrating and can't get back again.*

3 A 3 (paper) is a focused answer to the question in a recognizable way, but it is not a successful expository essay -- it depends almost exclusively on narration and/or a conversational tone. It is inconsistent in its control of written standard English. The writing, for example, is usually not quite controlled in paragraph form or sequence, although the student may raise some valid points. And the paper often wanders away from the assertion the writer makes at the opening, further and further into personal ancedote. Often the writer seems to be making an attempt to present a clear pattern of written English as distinct from spoken English, but his/her control breaks down fairly frequently. Such notions as the use of the apostrophe for possession, consistency of subject/verb agreement, verb endings are either unknown or unmastered.

4 A 4 (paper) is an essay: it is a focused response to the question asked; it follows, perhaps a simple, but an obviously controlled structure; it is readable at all times, and is free, for the most part, of error. The writer of a 4 (paper) is throughout demonstrating a grasp of an idea by using relevant evidence to back up the assertions made, and sometimes, too rigidly, ends up precisely where he/she began, having reduced the somewhat open-ended question to its simplest form that he/she could handle. It is this sense of minimal depth, minimal structure, minimal control that in some ways, to me, most clearly distinguishes a 4 (paper) from a 5 (paper).
Papers at this level tend to lack effective transitional elements. A minimal 4 (paper) is the product of careful remedial training, and the student follows, neatly, but not without obvious effort,

CONTINUED.....

CUNY NO. 5, cont.

4, cont.
the "formula" that the test dictates. In so doing, the writer avoids the problem of "incremental digression" that the 3 (paper) falls into.

5 One often says that the paper of a 5 is that of the "traditional" college freshman. The writing here leads one into speculations about previous training or experience with writing. This essay usually conforms to the patterns of expository writing traditionally taught and favored in college composition courses. It has a clearly marked off introduction which defines as well as asserts; a series of paragraphs which mark off stages in the writer's thinking about the issue -- although the paragraphs may be somewhat short or undeveloped at times -- and the evidence offered often is not simply immediate personal experience. The writer generally has some command over the processes of abstraction and can generalize. There is a mature vocabulary and the paper is free of error, except for occasional spelling lapses or sophisticated punctuation problems. Fragments, if they occur are usually rare, and almost always of the long subordinate clause variety. Subject/verb errors, likewise, may occur when the length and complexity of the sentences obscure the antecedents.

6 While a 6 (paper) is not an A+ paper, it often reads like one in the context of a reading of fifty 2,3 & 4 papers. A 6 is a paper which gives the reader the idea that the writer has used the occasion to write out a thoughtful, competent exploration of the question asked and the issue raised. The writer demonstrates a secure knowledge of the structure of a formal essay, and can use the language to convey his/her thought accurately. Errors are simply a question of occasional lapses in proofreading, or an awkward sentence, rather than those showing patterns of confusion or ignorance of conventions of standard English. *The paper may not get to an effective conclusion, but few entering students have much of an idea of how to end a paper, and even after a few semesters of composition, students still find most difficulty there. In any event, some lack of finality is preferable to the vise-like clamping down of the "minimal 4 (paper)" one-sentence formulaic repetition of the opening assertion.*

V.F

CUNY PANELIST NO. 6

6 organization: Sense of essay form; states opinion *with explanation;* supports opinion with logical reasoning *and fair amount of elaboration;* comes to conclusion -- understands that some sort of concluding statement should be made even if not very elaborate; *transition from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph clear; fluent; easy to read; moves along.*
grammar: shows understanding of principles of English grammar -- subject verb agreement, verb forms, punctuation.
vocabulary: facility with different word forms; *variety, especially in verbs.*
syntax: variety of sentence structures

5 organization: sense of essay form; states opinion; supports opinion *not necessarily at length;* sense of concluding statement; *fluent; moves along.*
grammar: subject-verb agreement -- more or less all correct; verb forms -- more or less all correct; punctuation -- understanding of simple sentence boundaries.

4 organization: sense of essay form; at least one argument to support opinion; some sense of coming to conclusion; *paragraphing may be a bit shaky but essay "makes sense."*
grammar: Subject-verb need not be perfect but should be under control in simple sentences; verb forms also, with allowances for irregular verbs; punctuation -- general understanding of sentence boundaries with allowances for occasional fragment; one run-on.
vocabulary: diction -- words should be used correctly.

3 organization: statement of opinion but starts weakening after that; some support -- not necessarily logical -- focus may be unclear -- support may not be logically connected to stated opinion or point may be supported but without development; *repetition;* essay needs to be read at least twice to understand what writer is trying to say; comes to some conclusion.
grammar: understanding at basic level but with enough lapses to be noticeable; gets in real trouble with grammar and syntax when trying to present more complicated sentences -- ideas (and) vocabulary weak (or) *limited.*

2 organization: similar to 3 score. *Repetition instead of development.*
grammar: lack of understanding of system; many errors make it difficult to read; vocabulary very limited.
Audience -- tone-- colloquial; awkward; jumps from point to point without making connections.

1 *No development of point; repetition; awkward -- uncomfortable with the language -- both native and non-native writers; very difficult to read; pile-up of errors almost totally distracting; wide variety of errors.*

V.

CUNY PANELIST NO. 7

1 In organization: lacks a main idea. In syntax: does not demonstrate a firm sense of sentence boundaries. In word level correctness: almost total confusion -- *many* individual words are wrong in spelling, word form, diction; relation between word pairs or groups is confused -- subject-verb, noun-pronoun, etc. *Perhaps concentrate on verbs. Mention capitalization -- scribal conventions.*

2 In organization: has rudimentray sense of a main idea. In syntax: occasionally manages to write a sentence with accurate boundaries. In word level correctness: many errors, but not every individual word is wrong in spelling, word form, and diction; relation between word pairs and groups -- subject-verb, noun-pronoun, etc. -- is occasionally correct. (General comment:) The key to the difference between a 1 (paper) and a 2 (paper) seems to be in organization. *Tendency to chatter in a breathless and rambling way, especially for ESL's; mention capitalization -- scribal conventions, knowledge that paragraph divisions exist; noun singulars and plurals.*

3 In organization: has a main idea but notion of how to develop that idea is unstable; *repetition rather than consecutive development.* In syntax: demonstrates a general sense of sentence boundaries but frequently makes errors. In word level correctness: a majority of individual words are correct in spelling, word form, and diction, but the errors are of the flagrant kind; relation between word pairs and groups -- subject-verb, noun-pronoun, etc. -- is generally signaled accurately, but there are habitual errors. (General comment:) The key to the difference between a 2 (paper) and a 3 (paper) seems in practice to be in organization and syntax.

4 In organization: has a main idea and in general, with an occasional slip, can develop the idea coherently. In syntax: is quite clear about sentence boundaries and can express some degree of subordination of ideas. In word level correctness: almost all individual words are correct in spelling, word form, and diction, but the errors are of the flagrant kind; relation between word pairs and groups is, with the exception of noun-pronoun, generally correct; *a few comma splices and fragmants are okay in this category; the real syntax problem is articulation -- subordination of ideas and loose logic; simple awkwardness -- wooden sentences, lack of case that distinguishes a 5 paper; choppiness -- lack of transitions and variation in sentence patterns.* (General Comment:) The key to the difference between a 3 (paper) and a 4 (paper) lies in a qualitative superiority in all three categories.

5 *Organization: develops main idea and puts paragraphs in logical sequence; may still be weak on transitions. Syntax: great majority of sentences are fluent; good subordination; good sentence rhythms. Word level: correct; problem is mainly diction, with occasional noun-pronoun problems. (General Comment:) Difference between a 4 (paper) and a 5 (paper) is syntax; a 4 (paper) is organizationally better than its style; a 5 (paper) is basically polished with flaws, as far as syntax and vocabulary are concerned.*

6 not described

V.H

NON-CUNY PANELIST NO. 1

6 Smooth syntax; variations in syntax; sentences weighted toward predicate; pretty much conventional spelling and punctuation. Paper conforms to academic notions of writer-reader relationship —e.g, no direct asides to reader; Facility with vocabulary. Conforms to academic notions of development -- specific details, spelled out rationales. Perceived as logical -- can be emotional but "professionally" emotional. Appropriate length.

5 Overall, smooth syntax and variable structure and vocabulary. Some non-grammatical constructions. Professional writer-reader relationship. Probably some non-standard spelling or punctuation but usually in conformity to our expectations.

4 Several perhaps consistent departures from standard syntax or usage, but basically syntax conforms to reader's expectations. Paper feels too confiding but not to point of reader's discomfort.

(I note that) I can tell the difference between a 3 (paper) and a 4 (paper) by the second, third, or fourth sentence -- I think. (Also) Introductions differ between 3 and 4 (papers): a 4 has a "professional" introduction -- i.e., a statement of opinion and then a generalization. (There is a) professionalism, authority, tone, and level of generalization. Facility with levels of generalization, switching levels.

3 Complex of over-embedded syntax that does not straighten out as sentences end. Paper perceived of as repetitious or under-developed or unsophisticated. Paper perceived of as too confiding or personal. Lack of facility with vocabulary: use of three or four words where one would would be better. Perceived emphasis on feeling or emotion rather than logic -- uncomfortable for reader.

Get free associating but still oral sound, lack of sentence variety. In (student sample essays coded) 3A and 3B, errors obscure meaning.

2 Overly complex syntax that characteristically fails to meet grammatical expectations of readers. Eccentric spelling or puncutation. Short or perceived of as "rambling" consistently defies conventional writer-reader relationship -- personal asides to reader. *Again, feels oral, syntax feels repetitive. Little sentence variety -- mostly coordinate patterns ??? Little embedding ???*

1 Non-standard syntax; unorthodox or foreign grammar; very short; dyslexic-type spelling. *Begins without conventional introduction. Writing feels like free association. Little conformity to conventions of written dialect. In oral tradition?*

V.I

NON-CUNY PANELIST NO. 2

Definitions:

Sentence structure	Measured by syntactical complexity and variety; assessment of ability to form written sentences as opposed to transcriptions of spoken sentences -- level of "formality"
Vocabulary	Perhaps measured by some standardized reading scale
Organization	Focus, movement, conclusion -- relationship of general to specific (and) level of abstraction
Paragraphing	Shows understanding of a paragraph as a unified idea package -- coherence and transitions
Mechanics	Spelling, punctuation, subject/verb, pronoun reference, formal usage
Voice	Confidence, sense of audience

Scores (Given here in the order written: by pairs, 2-1, 4-3, 5-6)

2
Sentence structure: oral transcription
Vocabulary: significantly limited
Organization: none or little
Paragraphing: none or little
Mechanics: fair but many errors
Voice: confused

1
Sentence structure: major problems
Vocabulary: totally inadequate
Organization: none
Paragraphing: none
Mechanics: major problems
Voice: confused

4
Sentence structure: forms "written" sentences, *but may punctuate carelessly*
Vocabulary: used "specific nouns" and modifiers
Organization: has a discernible thesis developed through some pattern -- examples, comparison/contrast, chronology, etc. General ideas developed through specifics; *organization may break down, but there is hope.*
Paragraphing: has paragraphs which more or less develop an idea each -- some transitions
Mechanics: spelling of routine words correctly -- good sentence puncutation, subject/verb agreement except in "fussy" situations; *some obviously "careless" errors*
Voice: bland but recognizable; *might fluctuate*

CONTINUED...

V.I

NON-CUNY NO. 2, cont.

3 Sentence structure: lack (of) "written" quality -- seems to be a rendering of oral communication
Vocabulary: limited struggles to find right word -- relies on cliches and abstractions
Organization: lacks form -- sense of progression and relationship of ideas -- has either only abstractions or only specifics; *starts and stops and starts again*
Paragraphing: few or no paragraphs -- little or no coherence or transitions; *may have separate paragraphs usually but not conceptually*
Mechanics: misspells ordinary words; poor sentence punctuation; subject/verb problems; dialect problems -- e.g., third person singular "s"
Voice: Probably very personal and subjective???

5 Sentence structure: competent sentences -- some syntactic complexity
Organization: beginning, middle, end; *but literal minded, little individuality*
Paragraphing: clear concentration of ideas into paragraph form
Mechanics: one or two problems in "fussy" areas
Voice: a little uncertain, probably neutral

6 Sentence structure: good sentence variety and length -- complex ideas expressed through subordination -- some sense of style
Organization: clear pattern -- sharp focus -- *emerging strategy tied to idea development*
Paragraphing: paragraphs related to each other, coherent, and adequate to develop ideas
Mechanics: only most minor problems
Vocabulary: precise and efficient -- reflecting ability to translate ideas into words
Voice: projects sense of a functioning mind -- identifiable person -- appropriate to situation

V.J

NON-CUNY PANELIST NO. 3

1 Consistent lack of standard English sentence sense. Consistent use of sentence fragments or nonstandard structures. Topic question is not addressed or may be addressed but inadequately, largely because of interference from problems in expression, inadequate vocabulary, sentence fluency, and basic mechanics and/or organization. Student demonstrates that she/he has little or no training in ordering ideas in writing; tends to write using a kind of free association with no editing of ideas.

2 Demonstrates minimal grasp of topic. Student may pick one aspect of topic, perhaps treating it idiosyncratically focusing on personal associations, developing paper in one or more tangential directions. No overall organizational structure. Resembles more free association on paper, or fragments of partially developed points juxtaposed in no particular order. Excessive number -- five or more? -- incomplete or incohernet sentences. Use of mechanics inconsistent, unschooled. Voice/audience confused.

3 Shows basic understanding of the topic. Attempts to address the topic (but) is unable to provide sufficient points of full development.* Writes maybe a paragraph, two at most. Sentences tend to be simple, vocabulary limited. *Over-developed syntax that doesn't lead anywhere.* Significant (three or more) number of sentence problems -- fragments, incoherence. *May tend to write a series of generalizations.

4 Shows basic understanding of topic. Supports a thesis minimally, using a few examples and illustrations with perhaps one or two major points. Avoids straying too far from the topic; uses minimal organization -- is able to indicate passing from one point to the next. Sentences basically correct, though may be somewhat stilted, lacking variety, (lacking) some smoothness. No major problems with mechanics. *One or two errors in sentence completeness and coherence acceptable.* Sense of voice exists. *Use of a learned, acceptable school language that student is not totally comfortable with. Sense of audience and voice demonstrated in student's attempts to express socially acceptable views.*

5 Thesis shows basic understanding of topic. Material supporting each major point in the paper is relevant to the topic, well developed, though not very original. Sentences are generally complete and free of gross errors. There may be minor errors in mechanics. Professional writer relationship; "canned" in that has listened to English teacher; consideration of question; sense of purpose, confidence and control of thinking process; audience awareness.

6 Clear thesis statement that demonstrates clear understanding of the broad implications of the topic or the writer's ability to narrow the topic creatively to suit the writer's own purposes. Sentences are complete and coherent. Student demonstrates fluency through use of variety of sentence structures, including some creative aberrations. Language (vocabulary, complexity of sentence) appropriate to subject and also varied for effect. Structure of paper: follows a consciously devised order of some complexity. Uses sound illustrative material from general knowledge, personal experience, or any special knowledge the student might have. Shows consciousness of audience in selection of supporting material.

V.K

NON-CUNY PANELIST NO. 4

6 Ability to produce provocative ideas/original thinking. Ability -- and willingness -- to follow these leads into new areas without losing focus or control called for by the topic question. Precision in choice of words. Frequent use of metaphor and concise examples give life and sparkle to prose. *Confidence in writing voice/"style." Some surface errors but are "typos": The kind that would probably be corrected by more careful editing. Greater syntactic maturity and diction.*

5 The student has considered the question carefully. The paper develops a thoughtful, generally consistent argument in response to the question; the writer follows his own ideas, supporting them with appropriate examples or details. The structure of the argument is generally clear; it communicates a sense of purpose; leads the reader from A to B with some confidence in the writer's control of his own thinking process. Punctuation and syntax show awareness of the limits of the sentence, agreement, standard usage; most common words spelled correctly; choices words that fit ideas of essay without sloppiness or straining. Awareness of reader. Sense that essay should have a beginning, middle, and end. Written not from formula imposed from without but composed from a personal response to a particular topic. *Same as a 4 (score) but more complex syntactical structures are used with greater control, vocabulary and usage is wider (and is) used with greater precision.*

4 *The plan of an argument can be seen, but student shows signs of uncertain judgment about how much needs to be said on any one point, is unsure of how reader will respond to his use of examples, choice of words. Errors in sentence structure, usage, etc. are present, but not a major distraction.*

3 Does not have a focused order; lacks sense of purpose. Essay starts several times in new, often conflicting directions. Frequent repetition instead of taking a central idea in a direction. Relationship between one idea and another -- or between an abstract statement and illustrative material -- is not clear. Sentences ramble on without conventional transitions or punctuation marks to signal shifts in thought. Spelling is so inconsistent as to be distracting even for non-English teachers. Few signs of awareness of audience. Gives impression that he doesn't believe what he is writing and doesn't expect the reader to either. *Supportive material is spliced together haphazardly. Also, the question is needlessly repeated as if to assure the writer he's still on the right track. Personal experinces or observations are offered but there is no plan to guide the argument. Frequent deviations from standard English, though meaning is understandable.*

2 Eccentric spelling, usage, verb endings, resorts to cliches exclusively. Grammar --what (does) it mean? *Impression is that student has thoughts and experiences related to the question, but is just tossing them down on the page without following the direction of his thinking; needless repetition, conflicting evidence; a lack of transitions frustrate the reader's search for consistent structure.*

1 Insufficient writing for accurate assessment. Student struggling to put words on page. ESL? Extreme discomfort with conventions of written English. *Student's frustration with the task of communicating in written English is the overwhelming message of the essay.*

V.L

NON-CUNY PANELIST NO. 5

Preamble: After I completed my first draft (of my scale), I went back and tried to describe each category in rubrics. I saw it largely as a shift in balance as the scale numbers increased. Imperfect as they are, they helped me identify where:

a. error clouded meaning
b. meaning became greater than error
c. meaning became argument

(Quite cloudy, I know.)

1 a. mechanical problems abound
b. ideation absent
c. numerous inventions
d. form shapeless

Literal translation from thought or speech to writing. Much is left out. Not just fragments of ideas but only barely stating. Stringing of ideas -- no real sense of sentence. May be one long run-on. Many spelling inventions i.e,"cough" for "taught"; punctuation highly impressionistic; handwriting problems; erratic capitalization; ESL will appear as a separate problem.

2 a. mechanical problems still appear -- possibly fewer in number but as serious
b. ideation absent
c. inventions -- fewer but there -- some evidence of conventions of Rube-Goldberg nature
d. form shapeless

Tone tends to be personal, confiding. *More oral than formal written patterns. Assertive -- no assumption that there may be another viewpoint.*

3 a. mechanical problems now almost equal
b. with ideational problems
c. poorly understood conventions but fewer inventions
d. shapeless

Writer may be verbose -- before logic not an issue. Writer represents everything writer has to say. Now more ideas but also confusions. Inaccuracy of terms, attempts at conventions, general sense of organization. More sentence structure but they are inconsistent. Problem of ordering of ideas -- fairly stale language.
Tone is also assertive; form absent.

4 a. ideational = b
b. mechanical
c. conventions -- better understood but not under control
d. form -- more model than strategy

Appearance of fairly clear but simplistic ideas; uneven; underdeveloped paragraphs but a sense that with some work writer can develop points. Syntactic structures are all right but simplistic and possibly stale. Problems are fairly stable -- i.e., here is where meaning is greater than error.

5 Ideational -- emergent argument
Conventions observed and handled fairly easily
Form -- evolving strategy

Ideas seems clear, may be somewhat underdeveloped. Some attempt at thinking of audience or using devices to try to get reader to agree.

CONTINUED.....

A voice emerges; argument appears; real attempt at beginning and ending of argument. Some faults, i.e., fragments, spelling, but not often.

6 Strong argument
Clear understanding of convention
Clear strategy
Ideas, argument well in hand. Might be interesting. Writer has control over argument. Relatively little difficulty with a variety of ways to say things. Good sense of audience.

V.M

NON-CUNY PANELIST NO. 6

6 Excellent grasp of topic. The paper answers the question directly and fully. Substance predominates the reader's reaction. Chooses good examples as proof of generalizations, opinions. Paper often, but not always, has vitality, life. It is dynamic. Gives the feeling that the writer is discovering something important in the process of writing the paper. Good grasp of correct sentence structure, although it may contain fragments and run-on sentences (the latter of which are less important to a 6 paper than improper subordination). Variety of sentence structure and sentence openers. Not all S-V-C sentences. Word choice and diction are good, apt "neat," fresh language. Few or no errors in spelling, punctuation and mechanics. Humor or satire characterize a 6 paper but usually not anything lower. Good correlation between humor/satire and content, sentence structure, diction and mechanics.

5 Good grasp of topic, although not outstanding. Answers the question directly but not as fully as a 6 paper. Uses specific details but uses more generalizations than a 6 paper. Paper lacks vitality, life. Tends more to social thinking than to original ideas. Appears a bit canned, predictable, but not excessively so. It tends toward things. Sentence structure is generally correct but not too much variety of sentence types or openers. Run-on sentences or fragments may appear but they stand out here as weaknesses. They don't go unnoticed; they aren't "excusable" as they may be in a 6 paper. A few errors in improper subordination -- awkward constructions? -- may appear. Word choice is OK but uses an especially good phrase or well-chosen word only one or two times. The language is predictable: a student who listened too well to his previous English teachers. Competent, decent sort of paper = competent, decent sort of person -- all-American boy/girl. More more errors in spelling, punctuation, mechanics than a 6 paper but not "too many," although may be "weak" in spelling especially.

4 Barely covers the topic sufficiently. Tends more toward generalizations than toward specifics. If the paper is specific, it deals with specifics superficially. Mentions some specifics in a sentence or two, then moves on to another idea or detail or example-- Hi Ho Silver, Away. Organization is okay but may have afterthoughts that need to be placed earlier if the paper could be revised. Sometimes wanders from topic -- goes off on a tangent, but enough of the sentences deal with the topic than are off the topic. Shows weaknesses in sentence structure, mostly improper subordination -- "awkward" expressions -- usually run-ons and/or fragments that stand out, *but run-ons are not piled up to give the impression of a mind that rambles on. The run-ons are isolated, usually one run-on sandwiched between two correct sentences. No piling up of four or five run-ons.* Very little variety in sentence types and openers. Most sentences are S-V-O. Sentences are shorter. Mostly simple or compound sentences. Errors in usage, idiomatic expressions. Language or diction is flat, television language, colloquial language. Tendency to many spelling errors -- too many, but never has been penalized before for them, never made responsible for correcting them. Little or no knowledge of punctuation rules. Punctuates at whim. Cannot cite any rules for any punctuation except period and question mark. *Solider than a 3 (paper), but has many of the sentence structure errors -- sometimes worse one, but occasionally and not throughout the paper -- as a 3 paper.*

CONTINUED....

V.M

NON-CUNY NO. 6, cont.

3 Does not answer the question directly or fully enough. Wanders from topic. Fuzzy thesis in opening # or two. Or not thesis at all. *Sometimes seems to be two different papers, neither of which is developed or explored fully enough -- two minimally satisfactory half-papers.* Narrow grasp of topic often because of narrow sense of own experience. Does not look outward to the world, society. Self-absorbed and therefore narrow application of topic to self. Shows inability to analyze, generalize outside of oneself -- "me" generation syndrome. *Excessively personal, subjective, narrow in use of examples, evidence, support.* Uses few specifics. Depends on generalizations and often cliches. Uses repetition to pad the paper. *Uses irrelevant sentences, information. Or fails to show the relationship between the sentences and the main idea or the sentence before it.* Wordiness is a virtue to this writer: the more words the more intelligent and convincing. The product of the 500 word punish assignment in high school: 500 words on Silence or Responsibility or Forgetfulness. Sometimes this paper is OK -- a 4 paper -- in content (and) specifics, but is very weak in sentence structure, diction or spelling. Weak in sentence structure, more so improper subordination -- awkward expressions -- than run-ons and fragments although there are plenty of those too. *Tendency to errors in parallel structure. Too many rambling sentences and series of three-to-four run-on sentences that give the reader the impression that the writer's mind rambles on or just strings ideas together off the top of his/her head, instead of carefully choosing one detail -- or specific -- over another. Unclear reference of pronouns that leads to confusion and misunderstanding. Seems like a decent first draft --very rough -- that a student should be able to correct -- in sentence structure, grammar, usage, spelling, and mechanics -- in a revision because we assume the student would be able to recognize most of these errors if he had time to revise, Superficial, repetitive, circular thinking; some very funny spellung errors -- e.g. "court" for "caught" -- the 3 student doesn't know how funny he/she is in his/her error. (Paper) not proofread at all. The 3 writer shoots his/her wad in just a few sentences -- four to six -- and then has nothing to say, so grapples for anything to fill up space to look impressive. Spends a lot of sentences at the beginning to nail the thesis into solid content, proof, examples. Finally does it in four sentences, then his/her mind takes a nap.*

2 not described

1 not described

NON-CUNY PANELIST NO. 7 (NOTE: STRICTLY SPEAKING, THIS PANELIST IS NOT "NON-CUNY" IN THAT THIS PERSON HAS SCORED CUNY ESSAYS AND SO WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE SCALE BEFORE THE NON-CUNY PANEL CONVENED. NEVERTHELESS, THIS PERSON IS NOT A CUNY FACULTY MEMBER AND SO IS ACCURATELY DESCRIBED AS "NON-CUNY." ALSO, THIS PERSON TYPED HER/HIS SCALE AFTER THE MEETING: WHAT IS SHOWN HERE IN PARENTHESES IS THE EQUIVALENT OF SCRIPT TYPEFACE IN THE OTHER TRANSCRIPTIONS IN THIS REPORT.) V.N

1--Error is so frequent and so general that meaningful patterns cannot be abstracted. There is little grasp of the topic and/or no sense of the essay as an entity.

2--Patterned thought does not extend beyond units two or three sentences long. (If longer patterns occur, they are associative and self-centered rather than logical.) Distinctions among levels of generalization are uncertain.

Error is frequent at even the most basic level of grammar, but patterns of error can be successfully abstracted. A high degree of error also occurs in the boundaries and syntax of sentences.

3--Although units of logically patterned thought are longer than in 2, and although the essay reveals the student's recognition that some overall strategy is needed, that need is not translated into an overall structure (or the structure is associative and self-centered.) (If an audience is assumed, it is of listeners not readers.) (In short, the writing is writer-based.)

Errors in basic grammar occur, perhaps frequently, but mainly at a more advanced level than in 2 (e.g., verb agreement with subjects having prepositional phrases.) Errors are easy to diagnose. Some sentences have complex structures, though their boundaries may be incorrectly marked (or simple structures are adhered to in order to avoid error). Generative sentences (those that attempt to follow contours of thought) lead to syntactic snags.

4--(The main difference between the 3 and the 4 paper is that, while errors in syntax, sentence boundaries, and even grammar occur, the writing in the 4 paper is primarily reader-based: the reader senses that she or he has been written for, rather than spoken to or allowed to overhear.) The ideas are simplistic; however, the need for a strategy manifests itself in some minimal logical structure that operates throughout the paper and to which most personal material is subordinated.

(Error does not interfere with meaning and may be due to incursions of a second language or dialect.) Frequent lapses in coherence may occur.

5--The paper has a clearly established plan, though it is imposed rather than generated by the topic at hand (e.g., the 5-paragraph essay). Sentences are fluent, generally conforming to contours of thought; they are generally error free, syntactically correct, and properly demarcated.

6--The entire paper, its sentences and overall structure, is an evolved response to the topic at hand. Error, syntactic and grammatical, presents no problem to the reader. Though lapses in coherence may occur, the paper can be read through easily, leaving no doubt as to its meaning from beginning to end. The paper stands as an entity consisting of well-integrated parts.

APPENDIX VI

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
FRESHMAN SKILLS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Writing Skills Assessment Test Evaluation Scale
(refined 1981-82)

6

The essay provides a well-organized response to the topic and maintains a central focus. The ideas are expressed in appropriate language. A sense of pattern of development is present from beginning to end. The writer supports assertions with explanation or illustration, and the vocabulary is well suited to the context. Sentences reflect a command of syntax within the ordinary range of standard written English. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are almost always correct.

5

The essay provides an organized response to the topic. The ideas are expressed in clear language most of the time. The writer develops ideas and generally signals relationships within and between paragraphs. The writer uses vocabulary that is appropriate for the essay topic and avoids oversimplifications or distortions. Sentences generally are correct grammatically, although some errors may be present when sentence structure is particularly complex. With few exceptions, grammar, punctuation, and spelling are correct.

4

The essay shows a basic understanding of the demands of essay organization, although there might be occasional digressions. The development of ideas is sometimes incomplete or rudimentary, but a basic logical structure can be discerned. Vocabulary generally is appropriate for the essay topic but at times is oversimplified. Sentences reflect a sufficient command of standard written English to ensure reasonable clarity of expression. Common forms of agreement and grammatical inflection are usually, although not always, correct. The writer generally demonstrates through punctuation an understanding of the boundaries of the sentence. The writer spells common words, except perhaps so-called "demons," with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

3

The essay provides a response to the topic but generally has no overall pattern of organization. Ideas are often repeated or undeveloped, although occasionally a paragraph within the essay does have some structure. The writer uses informal language occasionally and records conversational speech when appropriate written prose is needed. Vocabulary often is limited. The writer generally does not signal relationships within and between paragraphs. Syntax is often rudimentary and lacking in variety. The essay has recurrent grammatical problems, or because of an extremely narrow range of syntactical choices, only occasional grammatical problems appear. The writer does not demonstrate a firm understanding of the boundaries of the sentence. The writer occasionally misspells common words of the language.

2

The essay begins with a response to the topic but does not develop that response. Ideas are repeated frequently, or are presented randomly, or both. The writer uses informal language frequently and does little more than record conversational speech. Words are often misused, and vocabulary is limited. Syntax is often tangled and is not sufficiently stable to ensure reasonable clarity of expression. Errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling occur often.

1

The essay suffers from general incoherence and has no discernible pattern of organization. It displays a high frequency of error in the regular features of standard written English. Lapses in punctuation, spelling, and grammar often frustrate the reader. Or, the essay is so brief that any reasonably accurate judgment of the writer's competence is impossible.

APPENDIX VII

CUNY WRITING ASSESSMENT TEST

READER GUIDELINES FOR HOLISTIC SCORING

I. What is Holistic Scoring?

A. "Holistic evaluation of writing is a guided procedure for sorting or ranking written pieces." ---Charles R. Cooper
B. The whole of a piece of writing is greater than any of its parts.
C. Though in an analytic reading teachers may not agree on the weight to be given a particular trait, these same teachers will, in judging a work as a whole, rank papers in much the same way.

II. Establishing Test Standards

A. Function of "rangefinders"
B. Understanding the limits of the test universe
C. Reading and scoring by consensus
D. Sustaining the test standard

III. Scoring the Whole as Opposed to Detailing Its Parts

A. Read in entirety and with all deliberate speed
B. Avoid re-reading or error orientation
C. Avoid dominance of any one feature analysis (such as sexist language, repetition of certain words or phrases, etc.)
D. Read supportively and test contextually (50 minutes/pressure)
E. Read anonymously and avoid cultural/institutional second-guessing
F. Do not be influenced by handwriting quality and photocopy quality

IV. Reading for the Topic

A. Review the correct wording of the topic
B. Note key terms in the instructions and question
C. Consider topic acceptability
D. Avoid dependence on local placement criteria

V. Scoring

A. Six-point scale
B. Scores: 6 (high), 5, 4/3, 2, 1(low)
C. Determine upper/lower, then refine
D. Range within each score
E. Use all six scores in scale
F. Assign a single score (no split scores permitted)
G. Do not go back and change scores

VI. Reader Protocol

A. Do not talk to anyone during the reading
B. Time will be called after 50 minutes (our experience has been that all readers will finish in an hour)
C. Remain seated until coffee is announced
D. Place all materials (rangefinders, samples, essays, etc.) in the folder that has been made for you

---Richard M. Bedrosian, Chief Reader
April 30, 1982

APPENDIX VIII

1981-82 CUNY Chancellor's Task Force on Writing

Harvey Wiener, LaGuardia Community College, Chair
Milton Baxter, Borough of Manhattan Community College
Richard Donovan, Bronx Community College
Karen Greenberg, Hunter College
Lili Kapili, Brooklyn College
Donald McQuade, Queens College
Michael Southwell, York College
Linda Stanley, Queensborough Community College
Lynn Troyka, Queensborough Community College

Panelists for Refinement Study (Phase I)

CUNY: John M. Buckley, LaGuardia Community College
Laura A. Curtis, York College
Sarah D'Eloia Fortune, City College
Rosalind Depas, Kingsborough Community College
Marilyn Maiz, Instructional Resource Center
Jerrold Nudelman, Queensborough Community College
Eve Zarin, Lehman College

Non-CUNY: Miriam R. Baker, Dowling College
Patrick R. Brostowin, Nassau Community College, SUNY
William V. Costanzo, Westchester Community College, SUNY
Myra Kogen, Hofstra University
Barry Kwalick, William Paterson College
Stephen Lewis, Suffolk Community College, SUNY
Judith Matsunobu, Atlantic Community College

CUNY Chief Readers, 1981-82

Rosalyn Bernstein, Baruch College
Milton Baxter, Borough of Manhattan Community College
James DeMetro, Bronx Community College
Trudy Katzer, Brooklyn College
James Hatch, City College
Peter Miller, College of Staten Island
Alfredo Villanueva, Hostos Community College
Lewis Meyers, Hunter College
Charles Piltch, John Jay College
Dominick Caruso, Kingsborough Community College
Sarah Barber, LaGuardia Community College
Robert Carling, Lehman College
Eve Zarin, Lehman College
Clara Alexander, Medgar Evers College
Peter Michalski, New York City Technical College
Estelle Thaler, Queens College
Linda Stanley, Queensborough Community College
Robert Ryley, York College

Consultant Readers for the Pilot Study (Phase II)

Chief Reader: Richard Bedrosian, New York City Technical College, CUNY

Alan Adelson, City College, CUNY
Arnold Asrelsky, Queensborough Community College, CUNY
Rashida Aziz, LaGuardia Community College, CUNY
Edna Boris, LaGuardia Community College, CUNY
Judith Bronfman, John Jay College, CUNY
Evangeline Caliandro, Bronx Community College, CUNY
Diane Clunan, Hunter College, CUNY
Anthony DeLuca, Queens College, CUNY
Rosalind DePas, Kingsborough Community College, CUNY
Robert DiChiara, Nassau Community College
Louise Dibble, Suffolk County Community College
Joseph Dowling, Nassau Community College
Margaret Furcron, Rutgers University
Robert Fountaine, Suffolk County Community College
Gail Gordon, Hunter College, CUNY
Robert Granger, William Paterson College
Virgie Granger, William Paterson College
John Gregorian, New York City Technical College, CUNY
Sandra Hanson, LaGuardia Community College, CUNY
Joan Hartman, College of Staten Island, CUNY
Ronald Herzog, John Jay College, CUNY
Nicholas Howe, Rutgers University
Scott Johnson, Suffolk County Community College
Joanne Kraus, City College, CUNY
Joann Krieg, Hofstra University
Renee Levy, Nassau Community College
Georgianna Lord, City College, CUNY
Cecilia Macheski, LaGuradia Community College, CUNY
Anne Majied, Rutgers University
Janet Markoff, Dowling College
Charles Martin, Queensborough Community College, CUNY
Charles Matusik, New York City Technical College, CUNY
Cathy McDougal, Nassau Community College
Basir Mchawi, Rutgers University
Carol McGuirk, Rutgers University
Ruth Milberg-Kaye, Lehman College, CUNY
Richard Meyers, Rutgers University
Mildred Murphy, Suffolk County Community College
Vincent Nicolosi, Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY
Elsa Nunez-Wormack, Ramapo College
Helene O'Connor, Queensborough Community College, CUNY
Richard Patterson, New York City Technical College, CUNY
Jane Paznik-Bondarin, Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY
Geoffrey Platt, Hunter College, CUNY
Margery Robinson, College of Staten Island, CUNY
Kathy Roe, City College, CUNY
Peter Scheckner, Ramapo College
Joan Sevick, Nassau Community College
Sue Shanker, Queens College, CUNY

Frances Shapiro-Skrobe, Ramapo College
Henry Sikorski, Hofstra University
Robert Singleton, Queensborough Community College, CUNY
Brenda Spatt, Lehman College, CUNY
Elaine Stalter, Suffolk County Community College
Michael Steinman, Hofstra University
Paul Takis, Dowling College
John Tucker, Nassau Community College
William Washington, Jr., Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY
Diana Wienbroer, Nassau Community College
Catherine Wessel, Rutgers University